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EDITED BY
EDMUND GOSSE, C.B.
AND
THOMAS JAMES WISE



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE only selection of the poems of Swinburne hitherto available in England was one made in 1887 by the poet himself. It omitted so many public favourites that the publisher of this volume felt that the time had arrived for a new selection of Swinburne's poems, including these and also some of the many poems published after 1887, during Swinburne's lifetime and since. The publisher hopes that this new selection, made by Mr. Gosse and Mr. Wise, will be found to have satisfied the reasonable requirements of all Swinburne lovers, and that it will prove so attractive to new readers that it will lead them to the completer editions of his works.

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PRELUDE

BETWEEN the green bud and the red
Youth sat and sang by Time, and shed
From eyes and tresses flowers and tears,
From heart and spirit hopes and fears,
Upon the hollow stream whose bed
Is channelled by the foamless years;
And with the white the gold-haired head
Mixed running locks, and in Time's ears
Youth's dreams hung singing, and Time's truth
Was half not harsh in the ears of Youth.

Between the bud and the blown flower
Youth talked with joy and grief an hour,
With footless joy and wingless grief
And twin-born faith and disbelief
Who share the seasons to devour;
And long ere these made up their sheaf
Felt the winds round him shake and shower
The rose-red and the blood-red leaf,
Delight whose germ grew never grain,
And passion dyed in its own pain.

PRELUDE

Then he stood up, and trod to dust
Fear and desire, mistrust and trust,
 And dreams of bitter sleep and sweet,
 And bound for sandals on his feet
Knowledge and patience of what must
 And what things may be, in the heat
And cold of years that rot and rust
 And alter; and his spirit's meat
Was freedom, and his staff was wrought
Of strength, and his cloak woven of thought.

For what has he whose will sees clear
To do with doubt and faith and fear,
 Swift hopes and slow despondencies ?
 His heart is equal with the sea's
And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
 Is level to the speech of these,
And his soul communes and takes cheer
 With the actual earth's equalities,
Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and streams,
And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams.

His soul is even with the sun
Whose spirit and whose eye are one,
 Who seeks not stars by day, nor light
 And heavy heat of day by night.
Him can no God cast down, whom none
 Can lift in hope beyond the height
Of fate and nature and things done
 By the calm rule of might and right
That bids men be and bear and do,
And die beneath blind skies or blue.

To him the lights of even and morn
Speak no vain things of love or scorn,
 Fancies and passions miscreate
 By man in things dispassionate.
Nor holds he fellowship forlorn
 With souls that pray and hope and hate,
And doubt they had better not been born,
 And fain would lure or scare off fate,
And charm their doomsman from their doom,
 And make fear dig its own false tomb.

He builds not half of doubts and half
Of dreams his own soul's cenotaph,
 Whence hopes and fears with helpless eyes,
 Wrapt loose in cast-off cerecloths, rise
And dance and wring their hands and laugh,
 And weep thin tears and sigh light sighs,
And without living lips would quaff
 The living spring in man that lies,
And drain his soul of faith and strength
It might have lived on a life's length.

He hath given himself and hath not sold
To God for heaven or man for gold,
 Or grief for comfort that it gives,
 Or joy for grief's restoratives.
He hath given himself to time, whose fold
 Shuts in the mortal flock that lives
On its plain pasture's heat and cold
 And the equal year's alternatives.
Earth, heaven, and time, death, life, and he,
Endure while they shall be to be.

PRELUDE

" Yet between death and life are hours
To flush with love and hide in flowers;
What profit save in these ? " men cry:
" Ah, see, between soft earth and sky,
What only good things here are ours ! "
They say, " what better wouldest thou try,
What sweeter sing of ? or what powers
Serve, that will give thee ere thou die
More joy to sing and be less sad,
More heart to play and grow more glad ? "

Play then and sing : we too have played,
We likewise, in that subtle shade.
We too have twisted through our hair
Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear,
And heard what mirth the Mænads made,
Till the wind blew our garlands bare
And left their roses disarrayed,
And smote the summer with strange air,
And disengirdled and discrowned
The limbs and locks that vine-wreaths bound.

We too have tracked by star-proof trees
The tempest of the Thyiades
Scare the loud night on hills that hid
The blood-feasts of the Bassarid,
Heard their song's iron cadences
Fright the wolf hungering from the kid,
Outroar the lion-throated seas,
Outchide the north-wind if it chid,
And hush the torrent-tongued ravines
With thunders of their tambourines.

But the fierce flute whose notes acclaim
Dim goddesses of fiery fame,
 Cymbal and clamorous kettledrum,
 Timbrels and tabrets, all are dumb
That turned the high chill air to flame;
 The singing tongues of fire are numb
That called on Cotys by her name
 Edonian, till they felt her come
And maddened, and her mystic face
Lightened along the streams of Thrace.

For Pleasure slumberless and pale,
And Passion with rejected veil,
 Pass, and the tempest-footed throng
 Of hours that follow them with song
Till their feet flag and voices fail,
 And lips that were so loud so long
Learn silence, or a wearier wail;
 So keen is change, and time so strong,
To weave the robes of life and rend
And weave again till life have end.

But weak is change, but strengthless time,
To take the light from heaven, or climb
 The hills of heaven with wasting feet.
 Songs they can stop that earth found meet,
But the stars keep their ageless rhyme:
 Flowers they can slay that spring thought sweet,
But the stars keep their spring sublime:
 Passions and pleasures can defeat,
Actions and agonies control,
And life and death, but not the soul.

PRELUDE

Because man's soul is man's God still,
What wind soever waft his will
 Across the waves of day and night
 To port or shipwreck, left or right,
By shores and shoals of good and ill;
 And still its flame at mainmast height
 Through the rent air that foam-flakes fill
 Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear.

Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led,
 Across birth's hidden harbour-bar,
 Past youth where shoreward shallows are,
Through age that drives on toward the red
 Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
 To the equal waters of the dead;
Save his own soul he hath no star,
And sinks, except his own soul guide,
Helmless in middle turn of tide.

No blast of air or fire of sun
Puts out the light whereby we run
 With girded loins our lamplit race,
 And each from each takes heart of grace
And spirit till his turn be done,
 And light of face from each man's face
In whom the light of trust is one;
 Since only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul.

A little time we gain from time
To set our seasons in some chime,
 For harsh or sweet or loud or low,
 With seasons played out long ago
And souls that in their time and prime
 Took part with summer or with snow,
Lived abject lives out or sublime,
 And had their chance of seed to sow
For service or disservice done
To those days dead and this their son.

A little time that we may fill
Or with such good works or such ill
 As loose the bonds or make them strong
 Wherein all manhood suffers wrong.
By rose-hung river and light-foot rill
 There are who rest not; who think long
Till they discern as from a hill
 At the sun's hour of morning song,
Known of souls only, and those souls free,
The sacred spaces of the sea.

THE TRIUMPH OF TIME

BEFORE our lives divide for ever,
While time is with us and hands are free,
(Time, swift to fasten and swift to sever
Hand from hand, as we stand by the sea)
I will say no word that a man might say
Whose whole life's love goes down in a day;
For this could never have been: and never,
Though the gods and the years relent, shall be.

Is it worth a tear, is it worth an hour,
To think of things that are well outworn ?
Of fruitless husk and fugitive flower,
The dream foregone and the deed forborne ?
Though joy be done with and grief be vain,
Time shall not sever us wholly in twain:
Earth is not spoilt for a single shower:
But the rain has ruined the ungrown corn.

It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart,
Smitten with sunbeams, ruined with rain.
The singing seasons divide and depart,
Winter and summer depart in twain.
It will grow not again, it is ruined at root,
The bloodlike blossom, the dull red fruit;
Though the heart yet sickens, the lips yet smart,
With sullen savour of poisonous pain.

I have given no man of my fruit to eat;
 I trod the grapes, I have drunken the wine.
 Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet,
 This wild new growth of the corn and vine,
 This wine and bread without lees or leaven,
 We had grown as gods, as the gods in heaven,
 Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet,
 One splendid spirit, your soul and mine.

In the change of years, in the coil of things,
 In the clamour and rumour of life to be,
 We, drinking love at the furthest springs,
 Covered with love as a covering tree,
 We had grown as gods, as the gods above,
 Filled from the heart to the lips with love,
 Held fast in his hands, clothed warm with his wings,
 O love, my love, had you loved but me!

We had stood as the sure stars stand, and moved
 As the moon moves, loving the world; and seen
 Grief collapse as a thing disproved,
 Death consume as a thing unclean.
 Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast
 Soul to soul while the years fell past;
 Had you loved me once, as you have not loved;
 Had the chance been with us that has not been.

I have put my days and dreams out of mind,
 Days that are over, dreams that are done.
 Though we seek life through, we shall surely find
 There is none of them clear to us now, not one.
 But clear are these things: the grass and the sand,
 Where, sure as the eyes reach, ever at hand,
 With lips wide open and face burnt blind,
 The strong sea-daisies feast on the sun.

The low downs lean to the sea; the stream,
One loose thin pulseless tremulous vein,
Rapid and vivid and dumb as a dream,
Works downward, sick of the sun and the rain;
No wind is rough with the rank rare flowers;
The sweet sea, mother of loves and hours,
Shudders and shines as the grey winds gleam,
Turning her smile to a fugitive pain.

Mother of loves that are swift to fade,
Mother of mutable winds and hours,
A barren mother, a mother-maid,
Cold and clean as her faint salt flowers.
I would we twain were even as she,
Lost in the night and the light of the sea,
Where faint sounds falter and wan beams wade,
Break, and are broken, and shed into showers.

The loves and hours of the life of a man,
They are swift and sad, being born of the sea.
Hours that rejoice and regret for a span,
Born with a man's breath, mortal as he;
Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,
Weeds of the wave, without fruit upon earth.
I lose what I long for, save what I can,
My love, my love, and no love for me!

It is not much that a man can save
On the sands of life, in the straits of time,
Who swims in sight of the great third wave
That never a swimmer shall cross or climb,
Some waif washed up with the strays and spars
That ebb-tide shows to the shore and the stars;
Weed from the water, grass from a grave,
A broken blossom, a ruined rhyme.

There will no man do for your sake, I think,
 What I would have done for the least word said.
I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,
 Broken it up for your daily bread:
Body for body and blood for blood,
As the flow of the full sea risen to flood
That yearns and trembles before it sink,
 I had given, and lain down for you, glad and dead.

Yea, hope at highest and all her fruit,
 And time at fullest and all his dower,
I had given you surely, and life to boot,
 Were we once made one for a single hour.
But now, you are twain, you are cloven apart,
Flesh of his flesh, but heart of my heart;
And deep in one is the bitter root,
 And sweet for one is the lifelong flower.

To have died if you cared I should die for you, clung
 To my life if you bade me, played my part
As it pleased you—these were the thoughts that stung,
 The dream that smote with a keener dart
Than shafts of love or arrows of death;
These were but as fire is, dust, or breath,
Or poisonous foam on the tender tongue
 Of the little snakes that eat my heart

I wish we were dead together to-day,
 Lost sight of, hidden away out of sight,
Clasped and clothed in the cloven clay,
 Out of the world's way, out of the light,
Out of the ages of worldly weather,
Forgotten of all men altogether,
As the world's first dead, taken wholly away,
 Made one with death, filled full of the night.

How we should slumber, how we should sleep,
Far in the dark with the dreams and the dews!
And dreaming, grow to each other, and weep,
Laugh low, live softly, murmur and muse;
Yea, and it may be, struck through by the dream,
Feel the dust quicken and quiver, and seem
Alive as of old to the lips, and leap
Spirit to spirit as lovers use.

Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight;
For what shall it profit when men are dead
To have dreamed, to have loved with the whole soul's
might,
To have looked for day when the day was fled ?
Let come what will, there is one thing worth,
To have had fair love in the life upon earth:
To have held love safe till the day grew night,
While skies had colour and lips were red.

Would I lose you now ? would I take you then,
If I lose you now that my heart has need ?
And come what may after death to men,
What thing worth this will the dead years breed ?
Lose life, lose all: but at least I know,
O sweet life's love, having loved you so,
Had I reached you on earth, I should lose not again,
In death nor life, nor in dream or deed.

Yea, I know this well: were you once sealed mine,
Mine in the blood's beat, mine in the breath,
Mixed into me as honey in wine,
Not time, that sayeth and gainsayeth,
Nor all strong things had severed us then;
Not wrath of gods, nor wisdom of men,
Nor all things earthly, nor all divine,
Nor joy nor sorrow, nor life nor death.

I had grown pure as the dawn and the dew,
 You had grown strong as the sun or the sea.
 But none shall triumph a whole life through:
 For death is one, and the fates are three.
 At the door of life, by the gate of breath,
 There are worse things waiting for men than death;
 Death could not sever my soul and you,
 As these have severed your soul from me.

You have chosen and clung to the chance they sent you,
 ↘Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer,
 But will it not one day in heaven repent you?
 Will they solace you wholly, the days that were?
 Will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss,
 Meet mine, and see where the great love is,
 And tremble and turn and be changed? Content you;
 The gate is strait; I shall not be there.

But you, had you chosen, had you stretched hand,
 Had you seen good such a thing were done,
 I too might have stood with the souls that stand
 In the sun's sight, clothed with the light of the sun;
 But who now on earth need care how I live?
 Have the high gods anything left to give,
 Save dust and laurels and gold and sand?
 Which gifts are goodly: but I will none.

O all fair lovers about the world,
 There is none of you, none, that shall comfort me.
 My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled
 Round and round in a gulf of the sea;
 And still, through the sound and the straining stream,
 Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,
 The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,
 And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free.

Free, without pity, withheld from woe,
 Ignorant; fair as the eyes are fair.
 Would I have you change now, change at a blow,
 Startled and stricken, awake and aware?
 Yea, if I could, would I have you see
 My very love of you filling me,
 And know my soul to the quick, as I know
 The likeness and look of your throat and hair?

I shall not change you. Nay, though I might,
 Would I change my sweet one love with a word?
 I had rather your hair should change in a night,
 Clear now as the plume of a black bright bird;
 Your face fail suddenly, cease, turn grey,
 Die as a leaf that dies in a day.
 I will keep my soul in a place out of sight,
 Far off, where the pulse of it is not heard.

Far off it walks, in a bleak blown space,
 Full of the sound of the sorrow of years.
 I have woven a veil for the weeping face,
 Whose lips have drunken the wine of tears:
 I have found a way for the failing feet,
 A place for slumber and sorrow to meet;
 There is no rumour about the place,
 Nor light, nor any that sees or hears.

I have hidden my soul out of sight, and said
 "Let none take pity upon thee, none
 Comfort thy crying; for lo, thou art dead,
 Lie still now, safe out of sight of the sun.
 Have I not built thee a grave, and wrought
 Thy grave-clothes on thee of grievous thought,
 With soft spun verses and tears unshed,
 And sweet light visions of things undone?

“ I have given thee garments and balm and myrrh,
 And gold, and beautiful burial things.
 But thou, be at peace now, make no stir;
 Is not thy grave as a royal king’s ?
 Fret not thyself though the end were sore;
 Sleep, be patient, vex me no more.
 Sleep; what hast thou to do with her ?
 The eyes that weep, with the mouth that sings ?”

Where the dead red leaves of the years lie rotten,
 The cold old crimes and the deeds thrown by,
 The misconceived and the misbegotten,
 I would find a sin to do ere I die,
 Sure to dissolve and destroy me all through,
 That would set you higher in heaven, serve you
 And leave you happy, when clean forgotten,
 As a dead man out of mind, am I.

Your lithe hands draw me, your face burns through me,
 I am swift to follow you, keen to see;
 But love lacks might to redeem or undo me;
 As I have been, I know I shall surely be;
 “ What should such fellows as I do ? ” Nay,
 My part were worse if I chose to play:
 For the worst is this after all; if they knew me,
 Not a soul upon earth would pity me.

And I play not for pity of these; but you,
 If you saw with your soul what man am I,
 You would praise me at least that my soul all through
 Clove to you, loathing the lives that lie;
 The souls and lips that are bought and sold,
 The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,
 The lapdog loves that whine as they chew,
 The little lovers that curse and cry.

There are fairer women, I hear; that may be;
 But I, that I love you and find you fair,
Who are more than fair in my eyes if they be,
 Do the high gods know or the great gods care?
Though the swords in my heart for one were seven,
Would the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,
That knows not itself whether night-time or day be,
 Reverberate words and a foolish prayer?

I will go back to the great sweet mother,
 Mother and lover of men, the sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
 Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast:
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
 Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
 Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
 Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine
 Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
 Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
 I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;
Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,
As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips
 With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
 Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
 Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
 Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;
 Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
 Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,
 A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
 A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
 Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say.
 Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again;
 Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.
 But death is the worst that comes of thee;
 Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,
 But when hast thou fed on our hearts ? or when,
 Having given us love, hast thou taken away ?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,
 Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.
 The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,
 Shall they not vanish away and apart ?
 But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
 Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
 Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
 From the first thou wert; in the end thou art.

And grief shall endure not for ever, I know.
 As things that are not shall these things be;
 We shall live through seasons of sun and of snow,
 And none be grievous as this to me.
 We shall hear, as one in a trance that hears,
 The sound of time, the rhyme of the years;
 Wrecked hope and passionate pain will grow
 As tender things of a spring-tide sea.

Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,
Drowned gold and purple and royal rings.
And all time past, was it all for this ?

Times unforgotten, and treasures of things ?
Swift years of liking and sweet long laughter,
That wist not well of the years thereafter
Till love woke, smitten at heart by a kiss,
With lips that trembled and trailing wings ?

There lived a singer in France of old
By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
In a land of sand and ruin and gold
There shone one woman, and none but she.
And finding life for her love's sake fail,
Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,
And praised God, seeing; and so died he.

Died, praising God for his gift and grace:
For she bowed down to him weeping, and said
"Live;" and her tears were shed on his face
Or ever the life in his face was shed.
The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung
Once, and her close lips touched him and clung
Once, and grew one with his lips for a space;
And so drew back, and the man was dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.
Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.
Be well content as the years wear through;
Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures;
Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,
For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,
For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,
Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest, and be glad of the gods; but I,
 How shall I praise them, or how take rest?
 There is not room under all the sky
 For me that know not of worst or best,
 Dream or desire of the days before,
 Sweet things or bitterness, any more.
 Love will not come to me now though I die,
 As love came close to you, breast to breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses;
 I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong
 Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,
 As a wave of the sea turned back by song.
 There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,
 Face to face with its own desire;
 A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes;
 I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,
 The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,
 The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,
 The music burning at heart like wine,
 An armed archangel whose hands raise up
 All senses mixed in the spirit's cup
 Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder—
 These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard
 Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife;
 Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,
 Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.
 Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep
 Than overwatching of eyes that weep,
 Now time has done with his one sweet word,
 The wine and leaven of lovely life.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,
Fill the days of my daily breath
With fugitive things not good to treasure,
Do as the world doth, say as it saith;
But if we had loved each other—O sweet,
Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,
The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure
To feel you tread it to dust and death—

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given
All that life gives and the years let go,
The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,
The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low ?
Come life, come death, not a word be said;
Should I lose you living, and vex you dead ?
I never shall tell you on earth; and in heaven,
If I cry to you then, will you hear or know ?

A BALLAD OF LIFE

I FOUND in dreams a place of wind and flowers,
Full of sweet trees and colour of glad grass,
In midst whereof there was
A lady clothed like summer with sweet hours.
Her beauty, fervent as a fiery moon,
Made my blood burn and swoon
Like a flame rained upon.

Sorrow had filled her shaken eyelids' blue,
And her mouth's sad red heavy rose all through
Seemed sad with glad things gone.

She held a little cithern by the strings,
Shaped heartwise, strung with subtle-coloured hair
Of some dead lute-player
That in dead years had done delicious things.
The seven strings were named accordingly:
The first string charity,
The second tenderness,
The rest were pleasure, sorrow, sleep, and sin,
And loving-kindness, that is pity's kin
And is most pitiless.

There were three men with her, each garmented
With gold and shod with gold upon the feet;
And with plucked ears of wheat
The first man's hair was wound upon his head;
His face was red, and his mouth curled and sad;
All his gold garment had
Pale stains of dust and rust.
A riven hood was pulled across his eyes;
The token of him being upon this wise
Made for a sign of Lust.

A BALLAD OF LIFE

The next was Shame, with hollow heavy face
Coloured like green wood when flame kindles it.
He hath such feeble feet
They may not well endure in any place.
His face was full of grey old miseries,
And all his blood's increase
Was even increase of pain.
The last was Fear, that is akin to Death;
He is Shame's friend, and always as Shame saith
Fear answers him again.

My soul said in me: This is marvellous,
Seeing the air's face is not so delicate
Nor the sun's grace so great,
If sin and she be kin or amorous.
And seeing where maidens served her on their knees,
I bade one crave of these
To know the cause thereof.
Then Fear said: I am Pity that was dead.
And Shame said: I am Sorrow comforted.
And Lust said: I am Love.

Thereat her hands began a lute-playing,
And her sweet mouth a song in a strange tongue;
And all the while she sung
There was no sound but long tears following
Long tears upon men's faces, waxen white
With extreme sad delight.
But those three following men
Became as men raised up among the dead;
Great glad mouths open and fair cheeks made red
With child's blood come again.

Then I said: Now assuredly I see
My lady is perfect, and transfigureth
All sin and sorrow and death,
Making them fair as her own eyelids be,
Or lips wherein my whole soul's life abides;
Or as her sweet white sides
And bosom carved to kiss.
Now therefore, if her pity further me,
Doubtless for her sake all my days shall be
As righteous as she is.

Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms,
Even till the top rose touch thee in the throat
Where the least thornprick harms;
And girdled in thy golden singing-coat,
Come thou before my lady and say this:
Borgia, thy gold hair's colour burns in me,
Thy mouth makes beat my blood in feverish
Therefore so many as these roses be, [rhymes:
Kiss me so many times.
Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,
That she will stoop herself none otherwise
Than a blown vine-branch doth,
And kiss thee with soft laughter on thine eyes,
Ballad, and on thy mouth.

HYMN TO PROSERPINE

(AFTER THE PROCLAMATION IN
ROME OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH)

VICISTI, GALILEE

O Gods dethroned and deceased, cast forth, wiped
out in a day!
From your wrath is the world released, redeemed from
your chains, men say.
New Gods are crowned in the city; their flowers
have broken your rods;
They are merciful, clothed with pity, the young com-
passionate Gods.
But for me their new device is barren, the days are
bare;
Things long past over suffice, and men forgotten that
were.
Time and the Gods are at strife; ye dwell in the
midst thereof,
Draining a little life from the barren breasts of
love.
I say to you, cease, take rest; yea, I say to you all,
be at peace,
Till the bitter milk of her breast and the barren bosom
shall cease,
Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? but these thou shalt
not take,
The laurel, the palms and the pæan, the breasts of the
nymphs in the brake:
Breasts more soft than a dove's, that tremble with
tenderer breath;
And all the wings of the Loves, and all the joy before
death;
All the feet of the hours that sound as a single lyre,
Dropped and deep in the flowers, with strings that
flicker like fire.
More than these wilt thou give, things fairer than all
these things?
Nay, for a little* we live, and life hath mutable
wings.

A little while and we die: shall life not thrive as it may?
For no man under the sky lives twice, outliving his day.
And grief is a grievous thing, and a man hath enough
of his tears:
Why should he labour, and bring fresh grief to
blacken his years?
Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has
grown grey from thy breath;
We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the
fullness of death.
Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day;
But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel out-
lives not May.
Sleep, shall we sleep after all? for the world is not
sweet in the end;
For the old faiths loosen and fall, the new years ruin
and rend.
Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is a rock
that abides;
But her ears are vexed with the roar and her face
with the foam of the tides.
O lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of
racks and rods!
O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted
Gods!
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and
all knees bend,
I kneel not neither adore you, but standing, look to
the end.
All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits and sorrows
are cast
Far out with the foam of the present that sweeps to
the surf of the past:

Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and between the
remote sea-gates,
Waste water washes, and tall ships founder, and
deep death waits;
Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad about
with the seas as with wings,
And impelled of invisible tides, and fulfilled of un-
speakable things,
White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-toothed and
serpentine-curled,
Rolls, under the whitening wind of the future, the
wave of the world.
The depths stand naked in sunder behind it, the
storms flee away;
In the hollow before it the thunder is taken and
snared as a prey;
In its sides is the north-wind bound: and its salt is
of all men's tears;
With light of ruin, and sound of changes, and pulse
of years:
With travail of day after day, and with trouble of
hour upon hour;
And bitter as blood is the spray; and the crests are
as fangs that devour:
And its vapour and storm of its steam as the sighing
of spirits to be;
And its noise as the noise in a dream; and its depth
as the roots of the sea:
And the height of its heads as the height of the utmost
stars of the air:
And the ends of the earth at the might thereof
tremble, and time is made bare.
Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins, will ye chasten
the high sea with rods?

Will ye take her to chain her with chains, who is
older than all ye Gods?

All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall ye pass
and be past:

Ye are Gods, and behold, ye shall die, and the waves
be upon you at last.

In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the years, in
the changes of things,

Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and the world
shall forget you for kings.

Though the feet of thine high priests tread where thy
lords and our forefathers trod,

Though these that were Gods are dead, and thou
being dead art a God,

Though before thee the throned Cytherean be fallen,
and hidden her head,

Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean, thy dead shall
go down to thee dead.

Of the maiden thy mother men sing as a goddess
with grace clad around;

Thou art throned where another was king; where
another was queen she is crowned.

Yea, once we had sight of another; but now she is
queen, say these.

Not as thine, not as thine was our mother, a blossom
of flowering seas,

Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment,
and fair as the foam,

And fleeter than kindled fire, and a goddess, and
mother of Rome.

For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to
sorrow; but ours,

Her deep hair heavily laden with odour and colour
of flowers,

White rose of the rose-white water, a silver splendour,
a flame,
Bent down unto us that besought her, and earth
grew sweet with her name.
For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves, and
rejected; but she
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, and imperial,
her foot on the sea.
And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds and
the viewless ways,
And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue
stream of the bays.
Ye are fallen, our lords, by what token? we wist
that ye should not fall.
Ye were all so fair that are broken; and one more
fair than ye all.
But I turn to her still, having seen she shall surely
abide in the end;
Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and
befriend.
O daughter of earth, of my mother, her crown and
blossom of birth,
I am also, I also, thy brother: I go as I came unto
earth.
In the night where thine eyes are as moons are in
heaven, the night where thou art,
Where the silence is more than all tunes, where
sleep overflows from the heart,
Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in our world,
and the red rose is white,
And the wind falls faint as it blows with the fume of
the flowers of the night,
And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the shadow
of Gods from afar

¹ ψυχάριον εἰ βαστάζον νεκρόν.

EPICTETUS.

BEFORE THE MIRROR

(VERSES WRITTEN
UNDER A PICTURE)

Inscribed to James McNeill Whistler

I

WHITE rose in red rose-garden
Is not so white;
Snowdrops that plead for pardon
And pine for fright
Because the hard East blows
Over their maiden rows
Grow not as this face grows from pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,
Shut up from sight,
Love, is there sorrow hidden,
Is there delight?
Is joy thy dower or grief,
White rose of weary leaf,
Late rose whose life is brief, whose loves are light?

Soft snows that hard winds harden
Till each flake bite
Fill all the flowerless garden
Whose flowers took flight
Long since when summer ceased,
And men rose up from feast,
And warm west wind grew east, and warm day
night.

II

" Come snow, come wind or thunder
High up in air,
I watch my face, and wonder
At my bright hair;
Nought else exalts or grieves
The rose at heart, that heaves
With love of her own leaves and lips that pair.

" She knows not loves that kissed her
She knows not where.
Art thou the ghost, my sister,
White sister there,
Am I the ghost, who knows ?
My hand, a fallen rose,
Lies snow-white on white snows, and takes no care.

" I cannot see what pleasures
Or what pains were;
What pale new loves and treasures
New years will bear;
What beam will fall, what shower,
What grief or joy for dower;
But one thing knows the flower; the flower is fair."

III

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
Since joys go by;
Sad, but not bent with sadness,
Since sorrows die;
Deep in the gleaming glass
She sees all past things pass,
And all sweet life that was lie down and die.

There glowing ghosts of flowers
Draw down, draw nigh;
And wings of swift spent hours
Take flight and fly;
She sees by formless gleams,
She hears across cold streams,
Dead mouths of many dreams that sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted.
With sleepless eye
She sees old loves that drifted,
She knew not why,
Old loves and faded fears
Float down a stream that hears
The flowing cf all men's tears beneath the sky.

A MATCH

IF love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or grey grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

FAUSTINE

Ave, Faustina Imperatrix,
morituri te salutant

LEAN back and get some minutes' peace;
Let your head lean
Back to the shoulder with its fleece
Of locks, Faustine.

The shapely silver shoulder stoops,
Weighed over clean
With state of splendid hair that droops
Each side, Faustine.

Let me go over your good gifts
That crown you queen;
A queen whose kingdom ebbs and shifts
Each week, Faustine.

Bright heavy brows well gathered up:
White gloss and sheen;
Carved lips that make my lips a cup
To drink, Faustine,

Wine and rank poison, milk and blood,
Being mixed therein
Since first the devil threw dice with God
For you, Faustine,

Your naked new-born soul, their stake,
 Stood blind between;
God said " let him that wins her take
 And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan threw, no doubt;
 Long since, I ween,
God's part in you was battered out;
 Long since, Faustine.

The die rang sideways as it fell,
 Rang cracked and thin,
Like a man's laughter heard in hell
 Far down, Faustine.

A shadow of laughter like a sigh,
 Dead sorrow's kin;
So rang, thrown down, the devil's die
 That won Faustine.

A suckling of his breed you were,
 One hard to wean;
But God, who lost you, left you fair,
 We see, Faustine.

You have the face that suits a woman
 For her soul's screen—
The sort of beauty that's called human
 In hell, Faustine.

You could do all things but be good
Or chaste of mien;
And that you would not if you could,
We know, Faustine.

Even he who cast seven devils out
Of Magdalene
Could hardly do as much, I doubt,
For you, Faustine.

Did Satan make you to spite God ?
Or did God mean
To scourge with scorpions for a rod
Our sins, Faustine ?

I know what queen at first you were,
As though I had seen
Red gold and black imperious hair
Twice crown Faustine.

As if your fed sarcophagus
Spared flesh and skin,
You come back face to face with us,
The same Faustine.

She loved the games men played with death,
Where death must win;
As though the slain man's blood and breath
Revived Faustine.

Nets caught the pike, pikes tore the net;
Lithe limbs and lean
From drained-out pores dripped thick red sweat
To soothe Faustine.

She drank the steaming drift and dust
Blown off the scene:
Blood could not ease the bitter lust
That galled Faustine.

All round the foul fat furrows reeked,
Where blood sank in;
The circus splashed and seethed and shrieked
All round Faustine.

But these are gone now; years entomb
The dust and din;
Yea, even the bath's fierce reek and fume
That slew Faustine.

Was life worth living then? and now
Is life worth sin?
Where are the imperial years? and how
Are you Faustine?

Your soul forgot her joys, forgot
Her times of teen;
Yea, this life likewise will you not
Forget, Faustine?

For in the time we know not of
Did fate begin
Weaving the web of days that wove
Your doom, Faustine.

The threads were wet with wine, and all
Were smooth to spin;
They wove you like a Bacchanal,
The first Faustine.

And Bacchus cast your mates and you
Wild grapes to glean;
Your flower-like lips were dashed with dew
From his, Faustine.

Your drenched loose hands were stretched to hold
The vine's wet green,
Long ere they coined in Roman gold
Your face, Faustine.

Then after change of soaring feather
And winnowing fin,
You woke in weeks of feverish weather,
A new Faustine.

A star upon your birthday burned,
Whose fierce serene
Red pulseless planet never yearned
In heaven, Faustine.

Stray breaths of Sapphic song that blew
Through Mitylene
Shook the fierce quivering blood in you
By night, Faustine.

The shameless nameless love that makes
Hell's iron gin
Shut on you like a trap that breaks
The soul, Faustine.

And when your veins were void and dead,
What ghosts unclean
Swarmed round the straitened barren bed
That hid Faustine ?

What sterile growths of sexless root
Or epicene ?
What flower of kisses without fruit
Of love, Faustine ?

What adders came to shed their coats ?
What coiled obscene
Small serpents with soft stretching throats
Caressed Faustine ?

But the time came of famished hours,
Maimed loves and mean,
This ghastly thin-faced time of ours,
To spoil Faustine.

You seem a thing that hinges hold,
A love-machine
With clockwork joints of supple gold—
No more, Faustine.

Not godless, for you serve one God,
The Lampsacene,
Who metes the gardens with his rod;
Your lord, Faustine.

If one should love you with real love
(Such things have been,
Things your fair face knows nothing of,
It seems, Faustine);

That clear hair heavily bound back,
The lights wherein
Shift from dead blue to burnt-up black;
Your throat, Faustine,

Strong, heavy, throwing out the face
And hard bright chin
And shameful scornful lips that grace
Their shame, Faustine,

Curled lips, long since half kissed away,
Still sweet and keen;
You'd give him—poison shall we say?
Or what, Faustine?

AT A MONTH'S END

THE night last night was strange and shaken:
More strange the change of you and me.
Once more, for the old love's love forsaken,
We went out once more toward the sea.

For the old love's love-sake dead and buried,
One last time, one more and no more,
We watched the waves set in, the serried
Spears of the tide storming the shore.

Hardly we saw the high moon hanging,
Heard hardly through the windy night
Far waters ringing, low reefs clangling,
Under wan skies and waste white light.

With chafe and change of surges chiming,
The clashing channels rocked and rang,
Large music, wave to wild wave timing,
And all the choral water sang.

Faint lights fell this way, that way floated,
Quick sparks of sea-fire keen like eyes
From the rolled surf that flashed, and noted
Shores and faint cliffs and bays and skies.

The ghost of sea that shrank up sighing
At the sand's edge, a short sad breath
Trembling to touch the goal, and dying
With weak heart heaved up once in death—

The rustling sand and shingle shaken
With light sweet touches and small sound—
These could not move us, could not waken
Hearts to look forth, eyes to look round.

Silent we went an hour together,
Under grey skies by waters white.
Our hearts were full of windy weather,
Clouds and blown stars and broken light.

Full of cold clouds and moonbeams drifted
And streaming storms and straying fires,
Our souls in us were stirred and shifted
By doubts and dreams and foiled desires.

Across, aslant, a scudding sea-mew
Swam, dipped, and dropped, and grazed the sea:
And one with me I could not dream you;
And one with you I could not be.

As the white wing the white wave's fringes
Touched and slid over and flashed past—
As a pale cloud a pale flame tinged
From the moon's lowest light and last—

As a star feels the sun and falters,
Touched to death by diviner eyes—
As on the old gods' unintended altars
The old fire of withered worship dies—

(Once only, once the shrine relighted
 Sees the last fiery shadow shine,
 Last shadow of flame and faith benighted,
 Sees falter and flutter and fail the shrine)

So once with fiery breath and flying
 Your wingèd heart touched mine and went,
 And the swift spirits kissed, and sighing,
 Sundered and smiled and were content.

That only touch, that feeling only,
 Enough we found, we found too much;
 For the unlit shrine is hardly lonely
 As one the old fire forgets to touch.

Slight as the sea's sight of the sea-mew,
 Slight as the sun's sight of the star:
 Enough to show one must not deem you
 For love's sake other than you are.

Who snares and tames with fear and danger
 A bright beast of a fiery kin,
 Only to mar, only to change her
 Sleek supple soul and splendid skin ?

Easy with blows to mar and maim her,
 Easy with bonds to bind and bruise;
 What profit, if she yield her tamer
 The limbs to mar, the soul to lose ?

Best leave or take the perfect creature,
 Take all she is or leave complete;
 Transmute you will not form or feature,
 Change feet for wings or wings for feet.

Strange eyes, new limbs, can no man give her;
 Sweet is the sweet thing as it is.
 No soul she hath, we see, to outlive her;
 Hath she for that no lips to kiss ?

So may one read his weird, and reason,
 And with vain drugs assuage no pain.
 For each man in his loving season
 Fools and is fooled of these in vain.

Charms that allay not any longing,
 Spells that appease not any grief,
 Time brings us all by handfuls, wronging
 All hurts with nothing of relief.

Ah, too soon shot, the fool's bolt misses !
 What help ? the world is full of loves;
 Night after night of running kisses,
 Chirp after chirp of changing doves.

Should Love disown or disesteem you
 For loving one man more or less ?
 You could not tame your light white sea-mew,
 Nor I my sleek black pantheress.

For a new soul let whoso please pray,
 We are what life made us, and shall be.
 For you the jungle and me the sea-spray,
 And south for you and north for me.

But this one broken foam-white feather
 I throw you off the hither wing,
 Splashed stiff with sea-surf and salt weather,
 This song for sleep to learn and sing—

Sing in your ear when, daytime over,
 You, couched at long length on hot sand
 With some sleek sun-discoloured lover,
 Wince from his breath as from a brand:

Till the acrid hour aches out and ceases,
 And the sheathed eyeball sleepier swims,
 The deep flank smoothes its dimpling creases,
 And passion loosens all the limbs:

Till dreams of sharp grey north-sea weather
 Fall faint upon your fiery sleep,
 As on strange sands a strayed bird's feather
 The wind may choose to lose or keep.

But I, who leave my queen of panthers,
 As a tired honey-heavy bee
 Gilt with sweet dust from gold-grained anthers
 Leaves the rose-chalice, what for me ?

From the ardours of the chaliced centre,
 From the amorous anthers' golden grime,
 That scorch and smutch all wings that enter,
 I fly forth hot from honey-time.

But as to a bee's gilt thighs and winglets
 The flower-dust with the flower-smell clings;
 As a snake's mobile rampant ringlets
 Leave the sand marked with print of rings;

So to my soul in surer fashion
 Your savage stamp and savour hangs;
 The print and perfume of old passion,
 The wild-beast mark of panther's fangs.

A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

I HID my heart in a nest of roses,
Out of the sun's way, hidden apart;
In a softer bed than the soft white snow's is,
Under the roses I hid my heart.
Why would it sleep not? why should it start,
When never a leaf of the rose-tree stirred?
What made sleep flutter his wings and part?
Only the song of a secret bird.

Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing closes,
And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's dart;
Lie still, for the wind on the warm sea dozes,
And the wind is unquierer yet than thou art.
Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's wound
smart?
Does the fang still fret thee of hope deferred?
What bids the lids of thy sleep dispart?
Only the song of a secret bird.

The green land's name that a charm encloses,
It never was writ in the traveller's chart,
And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is,
It never was sold in the merchant's mart.
The swallows of dreams through its dim fields dart,
And sleep's are the tunes in its tree-tops heard;
No hound's note wakens the wildwood hart,
Only the song of a secret bird.

ENVOI

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part,
To sleep for a season and hear no word
Of true love's truth or of light love's art,
Only the song of a secret bird.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

IN a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves
Now lie dead. [of its roses]

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the grey bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briars if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled,
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale
calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look
thither,"
Did he whisper? "look forth from the flowers to
the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms
wither,
And men that love lightly may die—but we?"
And the same wind sang and the same waves
whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had
Love was dead. [lightened,

Or they loved their life through, and then went
whither?

And were one to the end—but what end who
knows?

Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them ?
What love was ever as deep as a grave ?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons here-
after
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and
We shall sleep. [laughter,

Here death may deal not again for ever:
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up
never,
Who have left nought living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be:
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

53

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand
spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

A BALLAD OF BURDENS

THE burden of fair women. Vain delight,
And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,
And sorrowful old age that comes by night
As a thief comes that has no heart by day,
And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them
grey,
And weariness that keeps awake for hire,
And grief that says what pleasure used to say;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,
A burden without fruit in childbearing;
Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,
Threescore between the dawn and evening.
The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering
In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,
Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,
Cover thy head, and weep; for verily
These market-men that buy thy white and brown
In the last days shall take no thought for thee.
In the last days like earth thy face shall be,
Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,
Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear
Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;
And say at night "Would God the day were here,"
And say at dawn "Would God the day were dead."
With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
Pain for thy girdle and sorrow upon thine head;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colours. Thou shalt see
Gold tarnished, and the grey above the green;
And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,
And no more as the thing beforetime seen.
And thou shalt say of mercy "It hath been,"
And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,
And talking, tears shall take thy breath between;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day
Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell
Thy times and ways and words of love, and say
How one was dear and one desirable,
And sweet was life to hear and sweet to smell,
But now with lights reverse the old hours retire
And the last hour is shod with fire from hell;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in spring,
White rain and wind among the tender trees;
A summer of green sorrows gathering,
Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,
With sad face set towards the year, that sees
The charred ash drop out of the dropping pyre,
And winter wan with many maladies;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight
And out of love, beyond the reach of hands,
Changed in the changing of the dark and light,
They walk and weep about the barren lands
Where no seed is nor any garner stands,
Where in short breaths the doubtful days respire,
And time's turned glass lets through the sighing
sands;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life and lust
Forsake thee, and the face of thy delight;
And underfoot the heavy hour strews dust,
And overhead strange weathers burn and bite;
And where the red was, lo the bloodless white,
And where truth was, the likeness of a liar,
And where day was, the likeness of the night;
This is the end of every man's desire.

ENVOI

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quickeneth,
Heed well this rhyme before your pleasure tire;
For life is sweet, but after life is death.
This is the end of every man's desire.

EROTION

SWEET for a little even to fear, and sweet,
O love, to lay down fear at love's fair feet;
Shall not some fiery memory of his breath
Lie sweet on lips that touch the lips of death ?
You leave me not; yet, if thou wilt, be free;
Love me no more, but love my love of thee,
Love where thou wilt, and live thy life; and I,
One thing I can, and one love cannot—die.
Pass from me; yet thine arms, thine eyes, thine hair,
Feed my desire and deaden my despair.
Yet once more ere time change us, ere my cheek
Whiten, ere hope be dumb or sorrow speak,
Yet once more ere thou hate me, one full kiss;
Keep other hours for others, save me this.
Yea, and I will not (if it please thee) weep,
Lest thou be sad; I will but sigh, and sleep.
Sweet, does death hurt ? thou canst not do me wrong :
I shall not lack thee, as I loved thee, long.
Hast thou not given me above all that live
Joy, and a little sorrow shalt not give ?
What even though fairer fingers of strange girls
Pass nestling through thy beautiful boy's curls
As mine did, or those curled lithe lips of thine
Meet theirs as these, all theirs come after mine ;
And though I were not, though I be not, best,
I have loved and love thee more than all the rest.

O love, O lover, loose or hold me fast,
I had thee first, whoever have thee last;
Fairer or not, what need I know, what care ?
To thy fair bud my blossom once seemed fair.
Why am I fair at all before thee, why
At all desired ? seeing thou art fair, not I.
I shall be glad of thee, O fairest head,
Alive, alone, without thee, with thee, dead :
I shall remember while the light lives yet,
And in the night-time I shall not forget.
Though (as thou wilt) thou leave me ere life leave,
I will not, for thy love I will not, grieve;
Not as they use who love not more than I,
Who love not as I love thee though I die;
And though thy lips, once mine, be oftener prest
To many another brow and balmier breast,
And sweeter arms, or sweeter to thy mind,
Lull thee or lure, more fond thou wilt not find.

PAN AND THALASSIUS A LYRICAL IDYL

THALASSIUS

Pan !

PAN

O sea-stray, seed of Apollo,
What word wouldst thou have with me ?
My ways thou wast fain to follow
Or ever the years hailed thee
Man.

Now
If August brood on the valleys,
If satyrs laugh on the lawns,
What part in the wildwood alleys
Hast thou with the fleet-foot fauns—
Thou ?

See!
Thy feet are a man's—not cloven
Like these, not light as a boy's:
The tresses and tendrils inwoven
That lure us, the lure of them cloys
Thee.

Us

The joy of the wild woods never
 Leaves free of the thirst it slakes:
 The wild love throbs in us ever
 That burns in the dense hot brakes
 Thus.

Life,

Eternal, passionate, awless,
 Insatiable, mutable, dear,
 Makes all men's law for us lawless:
 We strive not: how should we fear
 Strife?

We,

The birds and the bright winds know not
 Such joys as are ours in the mild
 Warm woodland; joys such as grow not
 In waste green fields of the wild
 Sea.

No;

Long since, in the world's wind veering,
 Thy heart was estranged from me:
 Sweet Echo shall yield thee not hearing:
 What have we to do with thee?

Go.

THALASSIUS

Ay!

Such wrath on thy nostril quivers
 As once in Sicilian heat
 Bade herdsmen quail, and the rivers
 Shrunk, leaving a path for thy feet
 Dry?

Nay,
Low down in the hot soft hollow
Too snakelike hisses thy spleen:
“O sea-stray, seed of Apollo!”
What ill hast thou heard or seen?
Say.

Man
Knows well, if he hears beside him
The snarl of thy wrath at noon,
What evil may soon betide him,
Or late, if thou smite not soon,
Pan.

Me
The sound of thy flute, that flatters
The woods as they smile and sigh,
Charmed fast as it charms thy satyrs,
Can charm no faster than I
Thee.

Fast
Thy music may charm the splendid
Wide woodland silence to sleep
With sounds and dreams of thee blended
And whispers of waters that creep
Past.

Here
The spell of thee breathes and passes
And bids the heart in me pause,
Hushed soft as the leaves and the grasses
Are hushed if the storm’s foot draws
Near.

Yet
 The panic that strikes down strangers
 Transgressing thy ways unaware
 Affrights not me nor endangers
 Through dread of thy secret snare
 Set.

PAN

Whence
 May man find heart to deride me ?
 Who made his face as a star
 To shine as a God's beside me ?
 Nay, get thee away from us, far
 Hence.

THALASSIUS

Then
 Shall no man's heart, as he raises
 A hymn to thy secret head,
 Wax great with the godhead he praises;
 Thou, God, shalt be like unto dead
 Men.

PAN

Grace
 I take not of men's thanksgiving,
 I crave not of lips that live;
 They die, and behold, I am living,
 While they and their dead Gods give
 Place.

THALASSIUS

Yea:

Too lightly the words were spoken
 That mourned or mocked at thee dead:
 But whose was the word, the token,
 The song that answered and said
 Nay?

PAN

Whose

But mine, in the midnight hidden,
 Clothed round with the strength of night
 And mysteries of things forbidden
 For all but the one most bright
 Muse?

THALASSIUS

Hers

Or thine, O Pan, was the token
 That gave back empire to thee
 When power in thy hands lay broken
 As reeds that quake if a bee
 Stirs?

PAN

Whom

Have I in my wide woods need of?
 Urania's limitless eyes
 Behold not mine end, though they read of
 A word that shall speak to the skies
 Doom.

THALASSIUS

She
Gave back to thee kingdom and glory,
And grace that was thine of yore,
And life to thy leaves, late hoary
As weeds cast up from the hoar
Sea.

Song
Can bid faith shine as the morning
Though light in the world be none:
Death shrinks if her tongue sound warning,
Night quails, and beholds the sun
Strong.

PAN

Night
Bare rule over men for ages
Whose worship wist not of me
And gat but sorrows for wages,
And hardly for tears could see
Light.

Call
No more on the starry presence
Whose light through the long dark swam:
Hold fast to the green world's pleasance:
For I that am lord of it am
All.

THALASSIUS

God,
God Pan, from the glad wood's portal
The breaths of thy song blow sweet:
But woods may be walked in of mortal
Man's thought, where never thy feet
Trod.

Thine
All secrets of growth and of birth are,
All glories of flower and of tree,
Wheresoever the wonders of earth are;
The words of the spell of the sea
Mine.

IN A GARDEN

BABY, see the flowers!
—Baby sees
Fairer things than these,
Fairer though they be than dreams of ours.

Baby, hear the birds!
—Baby knows
Better songs than those,
Sweeter though they sound than sweetest words.

Baby, see the moon!
—Baby's eyes
Laugh to watch it rise,
Answering light with love and night with noon.

Baby, hear the sea!
—Baby's face
Takes a graver grace,
Touched with wonder what the sound may be.

Baby, see the star!
—Baby's hand
Opens, warm and bland,
Calm in claim of all things fair that are.

Baby, hear the bells!

—Baby's head

Bows, as ripe for bed,

Now the flowers curl round and close their cells.

Baby, flower of light,

Sleep, and see

Brighter dreams than we,

Till good day shall smile away good night.

A SWIMMER'S DREAM

Somno mollior unda

1

DAWN is dim on the dark soft water,
Soft and passionate, dark and sweet.
Love's own self was the deep sea's daughter,
Fair and flawless from face to feet,
Hailed of all when the world was golden,
Loved of lovers whose names beholden
Thrill men's eyes as with light of olden
Days more glad than their flight was fleet.

So they sang: but for men that love her,
Souls that hear not her word in vain,
Earth beside her and heaven above her
Seem but shadows that wax and wane.
Softer than sleep's are the sea's caresses,
Kinder than love's that betrays and blesses,
Blither than spring's when her flowerful tresses
Shake forth sunlight and shine with rain.

All the strength of the waves that perish
Swells beneath me and laughs and sighs,
Sighs for love of the life they cherish,
Laughs to know that it lives and dies,
Dies for joy of its life, and lives
Thrilled with joy that its brief death gives—
Death whose laugh or whose breath forgives
Change that bids it subside and rise.

II

Hard and heavy, remote but nearing,
Sunless hangs the severe sky's weight,
Cloud on cloud, though the wind be veering
 Heaped on high to the sundawn's gate.
Dawn and even and noon are one,
Veiled with vapour and void of sun:
Nought in sight or in fancied hearing
 Now less mighty than time or fate.

The grey sky gleams and the grey seas glimmer,
 Pale and sweet as a dream's delight,
As a dream's where darkness and light seem dimmer,
 Touched by dawn or subdued by night.
The dark wind, stern and sublime and sad,
Swings the rollers to westward, clad
With lustrous shadow that lures the swimmer,
 Lures and lulls him with dreams of light.

Light, and sleep, and delight, and wonder,
 Change, and rest, and a charm of cloud,
Fill the world of the skies whereunder
 Heaves and quivers and pants aloud
All the world of the waters, hoary
Now, but clothed with its own live glory,
That mates the lightning and mocks the thunder
 With light more living and word more proud.

III

Toward the sunset's goal the sunless waters crowd,
Fast as autumn days toward winter: yet it seems
Here that autumn wanes not, here that woods and
streams
Lose not heart and change not likeness, chilled and
bowed,
Warped and wrinkled: here the days are fair as
dreams.

IV

O russet-robed November,
 What ails thee so to smile?
 Chill August, pale September,
 Endured a woful while,
 And fell as falls an ember
 From forth a flameless pile;
 But golden-girt November
 Bids all she looks on smile.

The lustrous foliage, waning
 As wanes the morning moon,
 Here falling, here refraining,
 Outbraves the pride of June
 With statelier semblance, feigning
 No fear lest death be soon:
 As though the woods thus waning
 Should wax to meet the moon.

As though, when fields lie stricken
 By grey December's breath,
 These lordlier growths that sicken
 And die for fear of death
 Should feel the sense requicken
 That hears what springtide saith
 And thrills for love, spring-stricken
 And pierced with April's breath.

The keen white-winged north-easter
 That stings and spurs thy sea
 Doth yet but feed and feast her
 With glowing sense of glee:
 Calm chained her, storm released her,
 And storm's glad voice was he:
 South-wester or north-easter,
 Thy winds rejoice the sea.

V

A dream, a dream is it all—the season,
The sky, the water, the wind, the shore?
A day-born dream of divine unreason,
A marvel moulded of sleep—no more?
For the cloudlike wave that my limbs while cleaving
Feel as in slumber beneath them heaving
Soothes the sense as to slumber, leaving
Sense of nought that was known of yore.

A purer passion, a lordlier leisure,
A peace more happy than lives on land,
Fulfils with pulse of diviner pleasure
The dreaming head and the steering hand.
I lean my cheek to the cold grey pillow,
The deep soft swell of the full broad bellow,
And close mine eyes for delight past measure,
And wish the wheel of the world would stand.

The wild-winged hour that we fain would capture
Falls as from heaven that its light feet clomb,
So brief, so soft, and so full the rapture
Was felt that soothed me with sense of home.
To sleep, to swim, and to dream, for ever—
Such joy the vision of man saw never;
For here too soon will a dark day sever
The sea-bird's wing from the sea-wave's foam.

A dream, and more than a dream, and dimmer
At once and brighter than dreams that flee,
The moment's joy of the seaward swimmer
Abides, remembered as truth may be.
Not all the joy and not all the glory
Must fade as leaves when the woods wax hoary:
For there the downs and the sea-banks glimmer,
And here to south of them swells the sea.

THE WHITE MAID'S WOOING

“ **H**OW will you woo her,
This white maid of thine?
With breaking of wastel,
Or pouring of wine?”

Not with pouring of cups
Or with breaking of bread;
But with wood that is cloven,
And wine that is red.

With rings will I woo her,
With chains will I wed;
With ships that are broken,
With blood that is shed.

Not with gold for a ring,
Nor with kisses on lips,
But with slaying of sailors
And breaking of ships.

“ And how will you tame her,
This mad maid of thine?
With kisses for seal,
Or with gold for a sign?”

THE WHITE MAID'S WOOING

With a bit for the mouth,
And a ring for the hand:
With a neck-chain of foam,
Or a waist-chain of sand.

With the wind for a seal,
And the sun for a sign;
And so I will wed her,
This white wife of mine.

RECOLLECTIONS

YEARS have sped from us under the sun

Through blossom and snow-tides twenty-one,
Since first your hand as a friend's was mine,
In a season whose days are yet honey and wine
To the pale close lips of Remembrance, shed
By the cupbearer Love for desire of the dead:
And the weeds I send you may half seem flowers
In eyes that were lit by the light of its hours.
For the life (if at all there be life) in them grew
From the sun then risen on a young day's dew,
When ever in August holiday times
I rode or swam through a rapture of rhymes,
Over heather and crag, and by scaur and by stream,
Clothed with delight by the might of a dream,
With the sweet sharp wind blown hard through my
On eyes enkindled and head made bare, [hair,
Reining my rhymes into royal order
Through honied leagues of the northland border;
Or loosened a song to seal for me
A kiss on the clamorous mouth of the sea.
So swarmed and sprang, as a covey they start,
The song-birds hatched of a hot glad heart,
With notes too shrill and a windy joy
Fluttering and firing the brain of a boy,
With far keen echoes of painless pain
Beating their wings on his heart and his brain,
Till a life's whole reach, were it brief, were it long,
Seemed but a field to be sown with song.

The snow-time is melted, the flower-time is fled,
That were one to me then for the joys they shed.
Joys in garland and sorrows in sheaf,
Rose-red pleasure and gold-eared grief,
Reared of the rays of a mid-noon sky,
I have gathered and housed them, worn and put by,
These wild-weed waifs with a wan green bloom
Found in the grass of that old year's tomb,
Touched by the gleam of it, soiled with its dust,
I well could leave in the green grave's trust,
Lightly could leave in the light wind's care
Were all thoughts dead of the dead life there.
But if some note of its old glad sound
In your ear should ring as a dream's rebound,
As a song, that sleep in his ear keeps yet,
Tho' the senses and soul rewaking forget.
To none so fitly the sprays I send
Could come as at hail of the hand of a friend.

BEFORE DAWN

SWEET life, if life were stronger,
Earth clear of years that wrong her,
Then two things might live longer,
Two sweeter things than they;
Delight, the rootless flower,
And love, the bloomless bower;
Delight that lives an hour,
And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,
When April melts in Maytime,
Love lengthens out his playtime,
Love lessens breath by breath,
And kiss by kiss grows older
On listless throat or shoulder
Turned sideways now, turned colder
Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving
Life gave, and seemed worth living;
Sin sweet beyond forgiving
And brief beyond regret:
To laugh and love together
And weave with foam and feather
And wind and words the tether
Our memories play with yet.

BEFORE DAWN

Ah, one thing worth beginning,
One thread in life worth spinning,
Ah sweet, one sin worth sinning

With all the whole soul's will;
To lull you till one stilled you,
To kiss you till one killed you,
To feed you till one filled you,
Sweet lips, if love could fill;

To hunt sweet Love and lose him
Between white arms and bosom,
Between the bud and blossom,

Between your throat and chin;
To say of shame—what is it?
Of virtue—we can miss it,
Of sin—we can but kiss it,
And it's no longer sin:

To feel the strong soul, stricken
Through fleshly pulses, quicken
Beneath sweet sighs that thicken,

Soft hands and lips that smite;
Lips that no love can tire,
With hands that sting like fire,
Weaving the web Desire
To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,
Our love with torch unlighted,
Paused near us unaffrighted,

Who found and left him free;
None, seeing us cloven in sunder,
Will weep or laugh or wonder;
Light love stands clear of thunder,
And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning
Of dying lights and dawning,
Night murmurs to the morning,
 “Lie still, O love, lie still;”
And half her dark limbs cover
The white limbs of her lover,
With amorous plumes that hover
 And fervent lips that chill;

As scornful day represses
Night’s void and vain caresses,
And from her cloudier tresses
 Unwinds the gold of his,
With limbs from limbs dividing
And breath by breath subsiding;
For love has no abiding,
 But dies before the kiss;

So hath it been, so be it;
For who shall live and flee it?
But look that no man see it
 Or hear it unaware;
Lest all who love and choose him
See Love, and so refuse him;
For all who find him lose him,
 But all have found him fair.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

HERE, where the world is quiet;
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
 In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
 A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
 And men that laugh and weep;
Of what may come hereafter
 For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
 And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbour,
 And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labour,
 Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
 And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

HESPERIA

OUT of the golden remote wild west where the sea
without shore is,
Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all, with the
fullness of joy,
As a wind sets in with the autumn that blows from
the region of stories,
Blows with a perfume of songs and of memories
beloved from a boy,
Blows from the capes of the past oversea to the bays
of the present,
Filled as with shadow of sound with the pulse of
invisible feet,
Far out to the shallows and straits of the future, by
rough ways or pleasant,
Is it thither the wind's wings beat? is it hither to
me, O my sweet?
For thee, in the stream of the deep tide-wind blowing
in with the water,
Thee I behold as a bird borne in with the wind
from the west,
Straight from the sunset, across white waves whence
rose as a daughter
Venus thy mother, in years when the world was a
water at rest.

Out of the distance of dreams, as a dream that abides
after slumber,
Strayed from the fugitive flock of the night, when
the moon overhead
Wanes in the wan waste heights of the heaven, and
stars without number
Die without sound, and are spent like lamps that
are burnt by the dead,
Comes back to me, stays by me, lulls me with touch
of forgotten caresses.
One warm dream clad about with a fire as of life
that endures;
The delight of thy face, and the sound of thy feet,
and the wind of thy tresses,
And all of a man that regrets, and all of a maid
that allures.
But thy bosom is warm for my face and profound as
a manifold flower,
Thy silence as music, thy voice as an odour that
fades in a flame;
Not a dream, not a dream is the kiss of thy mouth,
and the bountiful hour
That makes me forget what was sin, and would
make me forget were it shame.
Thine eyes that are quiet, thine hands that are tender,
thy lips that are loving,
Comfort and cool me as dew in the dawn of a moon
like a dream;
And my heart yearns baffled and blind, moved vainly
toward thee, and moving
As the refluent seaweed moves in the languid
exuberant stream,
Fair as a rose is on earth, as a rose under water in
prison,

That stretches and swings to the slow passionate
pulse of the sea,
Closed up from the air and the sun, but alive, as a
ghost rearisen,
Pale as the love that revives as a ghost rearisen
in me.
From the bountiful infinite west, from the happy
memorial places
Full of the stately repose and the lordly delight of
the dead,
Where the fortunate islands are lit with the light of
ineffable faces,
And the sound of a sea without wind is about them,
and sunset is red,
Come back to redeem and release me from love that
recalls and represses,
That cleaves to my flesh as a flame, till the serpent
has eaten his fill;
From the bitter delights of the dark, and the feverish,
the furtive caresses
That murder the youth in a man or ever his heart
have its will.
Thy lips cannot laugh and thine eyes cannot weep;
thou art pale as a rose is,
Paler and sweeter than leaves that cover the blush
of the bud;
And the heart of the flower is compassion, and pity
the core it encloses,
Pity, not love, that is born of the breath and decays
with the blood.
As the cross that a wild nun clasps till the edge of it
bruises her bosom,
So love wounds as we grasp it, and blackens and
burns as a flame;

And her lips grow cool with their foam, made
moist as a desert with dew.
With the thirst and the hunger of lust though her
beautiful lips be so bitter,
With the cold foul foam of the snakes they soften
and redden and smile;
And her fierce mouth sweetens, her eyes wax wide
and her eyelashes glitter,
And she laughs with a savour of blood in her face,
and a savour of guile.
She laughs, and her hands reach hither, her hair
blows hither and hisses,
As a low-lit flame in a wind, back-blown till it
shudder and leap;
Let her lips not again lay hold on my soul, nor her
poisonous kisses,
To consume it alive and divide from thy bosom,
Our Lady of Sleep.
Ah daughter of sunset and slumber, if now it return
into prison,
Who shall redeem it anew? but we, if thou wilt,
let us fly;
Let us take to us, now that the white skies thrill with
a moon unarisen,
Swift horses of fear or of love, take flight and
depart and not die.
They are swifter than dreams, they are stronger than
death; there is none that hath ridden,
None that shall ride in the dim strange ways of his
life as we ride;
By the meadows of memory, the highlands of hope,
and the shore that is hidden,
Where life breaks loud and unseen, a sonorous
invisible tide;

By the sands where sorrow has trodden, the salt
pools bitter and sterile,
By the thundering reef and the low sea-wall and
the channel of years,
Our wild steeds press on the night, strain hard
through pleasure and peril,
Labour and listen and pant not or pause for the
peril that nears;
And the sound of them trampling the way cleaves
night as an arrow asunder,
And slow by the sand-hill and swift by the down
with its glimpses of grass,
Sudden and steady the music, as eight hoofs trample
and thunder,
Rings in the ear of the low blind wind of the night
as we pass;
Shrill shrieks in our faces the blind bland air that was
mute as a maiden,
Stung into storm by the speed of our passage, and
deaf where we past;
And our spirits too burn as we bound, thine holy but
mine heavy-laden,
As we burn with the fire of our flight; ah love,
shall we win at the last?

FÉLISE

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?

WHAT shall be said between us here
Among the downs, between the trees,
In fields that knew our feet last year,
In sight of quiet sands and seas,
This year, Félide?

Who knows what word were best to say?
For last year's leaves lie dead and red
On this sweet day, in this green May,
And barren corn makes bitter bread.
What shall be said?

Here as last year the fields begin,
A fire of flowers and glowing grass;
The old fields we laughed and lingered in,
Seeing each our souls in last year's glass,
Félide, alas!

Shall we not laugh, shall we not weep,
Not we, though this be as it is?
For love awake or love asleep
Ends in a laugh, a dream, a kiss,
A song like this.

I that have slept awake, and you
Sleep, who last year were well awake.
Though love do all that love can do,
My heart will never ache or break
For your heart's sake.

The great sea, faultless as a flower,
Throbs, trembling under beam and breeze,
And laughs with love of the amorous hour.

I found you fairer once, Félide,
Than flowers or seas.

We played at bondsman and at queen;
But as the days change men change too;
I find the grey sea's notes of green,
The green sea's fervent flakes of blue,
More fair than you.

Your beauty is not over fair
Now in mine eyes, who am grown up wise.
The smell of flowers in all your hair
Allures not now; no sigh replies
If your heart sighs.

But you sigh seldom, you sleep sound,
You find love's new name good enough.
Less sweet I find it than I found
The sweetest name that ever love
Grew weary of.

My snake with bright bland eyes, my snake
Grown tame and glad to be caressed,
With lips athirst for mine to slake
Their tender fever! who had guessed
You loved me best?

I had died for this last year, to know
You loved me. Who shall turn on fate?
I care not if love come or go
Now, though your love seek mine for mate.
It is too late.

FÉLISE

The dust of many strange desires
 Lies deep between us; in our eyes
Dead smoke of perishable fires
 Flickers, a fume in air and skies,
 A steam of sighs.

You loved me and you loved me not;
 A little, much, and overmuch.
Will you forget as I forgot?
 Let all dead things lie dead; none such
 Are soft to touch.

I love you and I do not love,
 Too much, a little, not at all;
Too much, and never yet enough.
 Birds quick to fledge and fly at call
 Are quick to fall.

And these love longer now than men,
 And larger loves than ours are these.
No diver brings up love again
 Dropped once, my beautiful Félide,
 In such cold seas.

Gone deeper than all plummets sound,
 Where in the dim green dayless day
The life of such dead things lies bound
 As the sea feeds on, wreck and stray
 And castaway.

Can I forget? yea, that can I,
 And that can all men; so will you,
Alive, or later, when you die.
 Ah, but the love you plead was true?
 Was mine not too?

I loved you for that name of yours
Long ere we met, and long enough.
Now that one thing of all endures—
The sweetest name that ever love
Waxed weary of.

Like colours in the sea, like flowers,
Like a cat's splendid circled eyes
That wax and wane with love for hours,
Green as green flame, blue-grey like skies,
And soft like sighs—

And all these only like your name,
And your name full of all of these.
I say it, and it sounds the same—
Save that I say it now at ease,
Your name, Félide.

I said "she must be swift and white,
And subtly warm, and half perverse,
And sweet like sharp soft fruit to bite,
And like a snake's love lithe and fierce."
Men have guessed worse.

What was the song I made of you
Here where the grass forgets our feet
As afternoon forgets the dew?
Ah that such sweet things should be fleet,
Such fleet things sweet!

As afternoon forgets the dew,
As time in time forgets all men,
As our old place forgets us two,
Who might have turned to one thing then,
But not again.

FÉLISE

"O lips that mine have grown into
 Like April's kissing May,
 O fervent eyelids letting through
 Those eyes the greenest of things blue,
 The bluest of things grey,

"If you were I and I were you,
 How could I love you, say?
 How could the roseleaf love the rue,
 The day love nightfall and her dew,
 Though night may love the day?"

You loved, it may be, more than I;
 We know not; love is hard to seize.
 And all things are not good to try;
 And lifelong loves the worst of these
 For us, Félide.

Ah, take the season and have done,
 Love well the hour and let it go:
 Two souls may sleep and wake up one,
 Or dream they wake and find it so,
 And then--you know.

Kiss me once hard as though a flame
 Lay on my lips and made them fire;
 The same lips now, and not the same;
 What breath shall fill and re-inspire
 A dead desire?

The old song sounds hollower in mine ear
 Than thin keen sounds of dead men's speech—
 A noise one hears and would not hear;
 Too strong to die, too weak to reach
 From wave to beach.

We stand on either side the sea,
Stretch hands, blow kisses, laugh and lean
I toward you, you toward me;
But what hears either save the keen
Grey sea between?

A year divides us, love from love,
Though you love now, though I loved then.
The gulf is strait, but deep enough;
Who shall recross, who among men
Shall cross again?

Love was a jest last year, you said,
And what lives surely, surely dies.
Even so; but now that love is dead,
Shall love rekindle from wet eyes,
From subtle sighs?

For many loves are good to see;
Mutable loves, and loves perverse;
But there is nothing, nor shall be,
So sweet, so wicked, but my verse
Can dream of worse.

For we that sing and you that love
Know that which man may, only we.
The rest live under us; above,
Live the great gods in heaven, and see
What things shall be. . .

So this thing is and must be so;
For man dies, and love also dies.
Though yet love's ghost moves to and fro
The sea-green mirrors of your eyes,
And laughs, and lies.

Eyes coloured like a water-flower,
 And deeper than the green sea's glass;
 Eyes that remember one sweet hour—
 In vain we swore it should not pass;
 In vain, alas!

Ah, my Félide, if love or sin,
 If shame or fear could hold it fast,
 Should we not hold it? Love wears thin,
 And they laugh well who laugh the last.
 Is it not past?

The gods, the gods are stronger; time
 Falls down before them, all men's knees
 Bow, all men's prayers and sorrows climb
 Like incense towards them; yea, for these
 Are gods, Félide.

Immortal are they, clothed with powers,
 Not to be comforted at all;
 Lords over all the fruitless hours;
 Too great to appease, too high to appal,
 Too far to call.

For none shall move the most high gods,
 Who are most sad, being cruel; none
 Shall break or take away the rods
 Wherewith they scourge us, not as one
 That smites a son.

By many a name of many a creed
 We have called upon them, since the sands
 Fell through time's hour-glass first, a seed
 Of life; and out of many lands
 Have we stretched hands.

When have they heard us? who hath known
 Their faces, climbed unto their feet,
 Felt them and found them? Laugh or groan,
 Doth heaven remurmur and repeat
 Sad sounds or sweet?

Do the stars answer? in the night
 Have ye found comfort? or by day
 Have ye seen gods? What hope, what light,
 Falls from the farthest starriest way
 On you that pray?

Are the skies wet because we weep,
 Or fair because of any mirth?
 Cry out; they are gods; perchance they sleep;
 Cry; thou shalt know what prayers are worth,
 Thou dust and earth.

O earth, thou art fair; O dust, thou art great;
 O laughing lips and lips that mourn,
 Pray, till ye feel the exceeding weight
 Of God's intolerable scorn,
 Not to be borne.

Behold, there is no grief like this;
 The barren blossom of thy prayer,
 Thou shalt find out how sweet it is.
 O fools and blind, what seek ye there,
 High up in the air?

Ye must have gods, the friends of men,
 Merciful gods, compassionate,
 And these shall answer you again.
 Will ye beat always at the gate,
 Ye fools of fate?

Ye fools and blind; for this is sure,
 That all ye shall not live, but die.
Lo, what thing have ye found endure?
 Or what thing have ye found on high
 Past the blind sky ?

The ghosts of words and dusty dreams,
 Old memories, faiths infirm and dead.
Ye fools; for which among you deems
 His prayer can alter green to red
 Or stones to bread ?

Why should ye bear with hopes and fears
 Till all these things be drawn in one,
 The sound of iron-footed years,
 And all the oppression that is done
 Under the sun ? .

Ye might end surely, surely pass
 Out of the multitude of things,
Under the dust, beneath the grass,
 Deep in dim death, where no thought stings,
 No record clings.

No memory more of love or hate,
 No trouble, nothing that aspires,
No sleepless labour thwarting fate,
 And thwarted; where no travail tires,
 Where no faith fires.

All passes, nought that has been is,
 Things good and evil have one end.
Can anything be otherwise
 Though all men swear all things would mend
 With God to friend ?

Can ye beat off one wave with prayer,
Can ye move mountains ? bid the flower
Take flight and turn to a bird in the air ?
Can ye hold fast for shine or shower
One wingless hour ?

Ah sweet, and we too, can we bring
One sigh back, bid one smile revive ?
Can God restore one ruined thing,
Or he who slays our souls alive
Make dead things thrive ?

Two gifts perforce he has given us yet,
Though sad things stay and glad things fly ;
Two gifts he has given us, to forget
All glad and sad things that go by,
And then to die.

We know not whether death be good,
But life at least it will not be :
Men will stand saddening as we stood,
Watch the same fields and skies as we
And the same sea.

Let this be said between us here,
One love grows green when one turns grey ;
This year knows nothing of last year ;
To-morrow has no more to say
To yesterday.

Live and let live, as I will do,
Love and let love, and so will I.
But, sweet, for me no more with you :
Not while I live, not though I die.
Good night, good-bye.

SAPPHICS

ALL the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron
Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips; and I too,
Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters; .
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew her,
Looking always, looking with necks reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills whereunder
Shone Mitylene;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her
Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing
Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her;
While behind a clamour of singing women
Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion!
All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,
Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
 Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew not
Ah the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine were silent,
None endured the sound of her song for weeping;
Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns; but about her forehead,
Round her woven tresses and ashen temples
White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,
Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown for ever.
Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song.
Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, " Turn to me, O my Sappho;"
Yet she turned her face from the Loves, she saw not
Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,
Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,
Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,
Saw not her hands wrung;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten
Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-
strings,
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand, her chosen,
Fairer than all men;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,
Full of music; only beheld among them
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;
Then The Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent;
Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song was that song.
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,
Full of fruitless women and music only.
Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the grey sea-side, unassuaged, unheard-of,
Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,
Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting,
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears, and singing
Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,
Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity,
Hearing, to hear them.

LOVE AT SEA

IMITATED FROM THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

WE are in Love's land to-day;
Where shall we go?
Love, shall we start or stay,
Or sail or row?
There's many a wind and way,
And never a May but May;
We are in Love's hand to-day;
Where shall we go?

Our land-wind is the breath
Of sorrows kissed to death
And joys that were;
Our ballast is a rose;
Our way lies where God knows
And Love knows where.
We are in Love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
Our masts are bills of doves,
Our decks fine gold;
Our ropes are dead maids' hair,
Our stores are love-shafts fair
And manifold.
We are in Love's land to-day—

LOVE AT SEA

Where shall we land you, sweet ?
On fields of strange men's feet,
 Or fields near home ?
Or where the fire-flowers blow,
Or where the flowers of snow
 Or flowers of foam ?
 We are in Love's hand to-day—

Land me, she says, where Love
Shows but one shaft, one dove,
 One heart, one hand.
—A shore like that, my dear,
Lies where no man will steer,
 No maiden land.

A VISION OF SPRING IN WINTER

O TENDER time that love thinks long to see,
Sweet foot of spring that with her footfall sows
Late snowlike flowery leavings of the snows,
Be not too long irresolute to be;
O mother-month, where have they hidden thee ?
Out of the pale time of the flowerless rose
I reach my heart out toward the springtime lands,
I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours,
The purplest of the prime;
I lean my soul down over them, with hands
Made wide to take the ghostly growths of flowers;
I send my love back to the lovely time.

Where has the greenwood hid thy gracious head ?
Veiled with what visions while the grey world
grieves,
Or muffled with what shadows of green leaves,
What warm intangible green shadows spread
To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy bed ?
What sleep enchanteth thee ? what delight deceiveth ?
Where the deep dreamlike dew before the dawn
Feels not the fingers of the sunlight yet
Its silver web unweave,
Thy footless ghost on some unfooted lawn
Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear to fret
Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn and eve.

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,
Large nightfall, nor imperial plenilune,
Nor strong sweet shape of the full-breasted noon;
But where the silver-sandalled shadows are,
Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar,
Moves with the mild gait of an ungrown moon:
Hard overhead the half-lit crescent swims,
The tender-coloured night draws hardly breath,
The light is listening;
They watch the dawn of slender-shapen limbs,
Virginal, born again of doubtful death,
Chill foster-father of the weanling spring.

As sweet desire of day before the day,
As dreams of love before the true love born,
From the outer edge of winter overworn
The ghost arisen of May before the May
Takes through dim air her unawakened way,
The gracious ghost of morning risen ere morn.
With little unblown breasts and child-eyed looks
Following, the very maid, the girl-child spring,
Lifts windward her bright brows,
Dips her light feet in warm and moving brooks,
And kindles with her own mouth's colouring
The fearful firstlings of the plumeless boughs.

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see,
Fair face that art not, how thy maiden breath
Shall put at last the deadly days to death
And fill the fields and fire the woods with thee
And seaward hollows where my feet would be
When heaven shall hear the word that April saith
To change the cold heart of the weary time,
To stir and soften all the time to tears,
Tears joyfuller than mirth;
As even to May's clear height the young days climb
With feet not swifter than those fair first years
Whose flowers revive not with thy flowers
on earth.

I would not bid thee, though I might, give back
One good thing youth has given and borne away;
I crave not any comfort of the day
That is not, nor on time's retrodden track
Would turn to meet the white-robed hours or black
That long since left me on their mortal way;
Nor light nor love that has been, nor the breath
That comes with morning from the sun to be
And sets light hope on fire;
No fruit, no flower thought once too fair for death,
No flower nor hour once fallen from life's green tree,
No leaf once plucked or once fulfilled desire.

The morning song beneath the stars that fled
With twilight through the moonless mountain air,
While youth with burning lips and wreathless hair
Sang toward the sun that was to crown his head,
Rising; the hopes that triumphed and fell dead;
The sweet swift eyes and songs of hours that were;
These mayst thou not give back for ever; these,
As at the sea's heart all her wrecks lie waste,
Lie deeper than the sea;
But flowers thou mayst, and winds, and hours of ease,
And all its April to the world thou mayst
Give back, and half my April back to me.

A BALLAD OF BATH

LIKE a queen enchanted who may not laugh or weep,
Glad at heart and guarded from change and care
like ours,
Girt about with beauty by days and nights that creep
Soft as breathless ripples that softly shoreward sweep,
Lies the lovely city whose grace no grief deflowers.
Age and grey forgetfulness, time that shifts and veers,
Touch not thee, our fairest, whose charm no rival
nears,
Hailed as England's Florence of one whose praise
gives grace,
Landor, once thy lover, a name that love reveres:
Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

Dawn whereof we know not, and noon whose fruit
we reap,
Garnered up in record of years that fell like flowers,
Sunset liker sunrise along the shining steep
Whence thy fair face lightens, and where thy soft
springs leap,
Crown at once and gird thee with grace of guardian
powers
Loved of men beloved of us, souls that fame inspheres,
All thine air hath music for him who dreams and
hears;

Voices mixed of multitudes, feet of friends that
pace,
Witness why for ever, if heaven's face clouds or
clears,
Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

Peace hath here found harbourage mild as very
sleep:
Not the hills and waters, the fields and wildwood
bowers,
Smile or speak more tenderly, clothed with peace
more deep,
Here than memory whispers of days our memories
keep
Fast with love and laughter and dreams of withered
hours.
Bright were these as blossom of old, and thought
endears
Still the fair soft phantoms that pass with smiles or
tears,
Sweet as rose-leaves hoarded and dried wherein we
trace
Still the soul and spirit of sense that lives and cheers:
Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

City lulled asleep by the chime of passing years,
Sweeter smiles thy rest than the radiance round thy
peers;
Only love and lovely remembrance here have place;
Time on thee lies lighter than music on men's ears;
Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

BLESSED AMONG WOMEN
TO THE SIGNORA CAIROLI

BLESSED was she that bare,
 Hidden in flesh most fair,
For all men's sake the likeness of all love;
 Holy that virgin's womb,
 The old record saith, on whom
The glory of God alighted as a dove;
 Blessed, who brought to gracious birth
 The sweet-souled Saviour of a man-tormented earth.

But four times art thou blest,
 At whose most holy breast
Four times a godlike soldier-saviour hung;
 And thence a fourfold Christ
 Given to be sacrificed
To the same cross as the same bosom clung;
 Poured the same blood, to leave the same
Light on the many-folded mountain-skirts of fame.

Shall they and thou not live,
 The children thou didst give
Forth of thine hands, a godlike gift, to death,
 Through fire of death to pass
 For her high sake that was
Thine and their mother, that gave all you breath ?
 Shall ye not live till time drop dead,
O mother, and each her children's consecrated head ?

Many brought gifts to take
For her love's supreme sake,
Life and life's love, pleasure and praise and rest,
And went forth bare; but thou,
So much once richer, and now
Poorer than all these, more than these be blest;
Poorer so much, by so much given,
Than who gives earth for heaven's sake, not for earth's
sake heaven.

Somewhat could each soul save,
What thing soever it gave,
But thine, mother, what has thy soul kept back ?
None of thine all, not one,
To serve thee and be thy son,
Feed with love all thy days, lest one day lack;
All thy whole life's love, thine heart's whole,
Thou hast given as who gives gladly, O thou the
supreme soul.

The heart's pure flesh and blood,
The heaven thy motherhood,
The live lips, the live eyes, that lived on thee;
The hands that clove with sweet
Blind clutch to thine, the feet
That felt on earth their first way to thy knee;
The little laughter of mouths milk-fed,
Now open again to feed on dust among the dead;

The fair, strong, young men's strength,
Light of life-days and length,
And glory of earth seen under and stars above,
 And years that bring to tame
 Now the wild falcon fame,
Now, to stroke smooth, the dove-white breast of love;
 The life unlived, the unsown seeds,
Suns unhehelden, songs unsung, and undone deeds.

Therefore shall man's love be
As an own son to thee,
And the world's worship of thee for a child;
 All thine own land as one
 New-born, a nursing son,
All thine own people a new birth undefiled;
 And all the unborn Italian time,
And all its glory, and all its works, thy seed sublime.

That henceforth no man's breath,
Saying "Italy," but saith
In that most sovereign word thine equal name;
 Nor can one speak of thee
 But he saith "Italy,"
Seeing in two suns one co-eternal flame;
 One heat, one heaven, one heart, one fire,
One light, one love, one benediction, one desire.

Blest above praise and prayer
And incense of men's air,
Thy place is higher than where such voices rise
As in men's temples make
Music for some vain sake,
This God's or that God's, in one weary wise;
Thee the soul silent, the shut heart,
The locked lips of the spirit praise thee that thou art.

Yea, for man's whole life's length,
And with man's whole soul's strength,
We praise thee, O holy, and bless thee, O mother of
And send forth as on wings [lights;
The world's heart's thanksgivings,
Song-birds to sing thy days through and thy nights;
And wrap thee around and arch thee above
With the air of benediction and the heaven of love.

And toward thee our unbreathed words
Fly speechless, winged as birds,
As the Indian flock, children of Paradise,
The winged things without feet,
Fed with God's dew for meat,
That live in the air and light of the utter skies;
So fleet, so flying a footless flight,
With wings for feet love seeks thee, to partake thy
sight.

Love like a clear sky spread
Bends over thy loved head,
As a new heaven bends over a new-born earth,
When the old night's womb is great
With young stars passionate
And fair new planets fiery-fresh from birth;
And moon-white here, there hot like Mars,
Souls that are worlds shine on thee, spirits that are
stars.

Till the whole sky burns through
With heaven's own heart-deep hue,
With passion-coloured glories of lit souls;
And thine above all names
Writ highest with lettering flames
Lightens, and all the old starriest aureoles
And all the old holiest memories wane,
And the old names of love's chosen, found in thy sight
vain.

And crowned heads are discrowned,
And stars sink without sound,
And love's self for thy love's sake waxes pale;
Seeing from his storied skies
In what new reverent wise
Thee Rome's most highest, her sovereign daughters,
Thee Portia, thee Veturia grey, [hail;
Thee Arria, thee Cornelia, Roman more than they.

Even all these as all we .
 Subdue themselves to thee,
 Bow their heads haloed, quench their fiery fame;
 Seen through dim years divine,
 Their faint lights feminine
 Sink, then spring up rekindled from thy flame;
 Fade, then reflower and reillumne
 From thy fresh spring their wintering age with new-
 blown bloom.

To thy much holier head
 Even theirs, the holy and dead,
 Bow themselves each one from her heavenward height;
 Each in her shining turn,
 All tremble toward thee and yearn
 To melt in thine their consummated light;
 Till from day's Capitolian dome
 One glory of many glories lighten upon Rome.

Hush thyself, song, and cease,
 Close, lips, and hold your peace;
 What help hast thou, what part have ye herein ?
 But you, with sweet shut eyes,
 Heart-hidden memories,
 Dreams and dumb thoughts that keep what things have
 Silent, and pure of all words said, [been
 Praise without song the living, without dirge the
 dead.

Thou, strengthless in these things,
Song, fold thy feebler wings,
And as a pilgrim go forth girt and shod,
And where the new graves are,
And where the sunset star,
To the pure spirit of man that men call God,
To the high soul of things, that is
Made of men's heavenlier hopes and mightier
memories;

To the elements that make
For the soul's living sake
This raiment of dead things, of shadow and trance,
That give us chance and time
Wherein to aspire and climb
And set our life's work higher than time or chance;
The old sacred elements, that give
The breath of life to days that die, to deeds that live;

To them, veiled gods and great,
There bow thee and dedicate
The speechless spirit in these thy weak words hidden;
And mix thy reverent breath
With holier air of death,
At the high feast of sorrow a guest unbidden,
Till with divine triumphal tears
Thou fill men's eyes who listen with a heart that
hears.

HERTHA

I AM that which began;
Out of me the years roll;
Out of me God and man;
I am equal and whole;
God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily;
I am the soul.

Before ever land was,
Before ever the sea,
Or soft hair of the grass,
Or fair limbs of the tree,
Or the flesh-coloured fruit of my branches, I was,
and thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources
First drifted and swam;
Out of me are the forces
That save it or damn;
Out of me man and woman, and wild-beast and bird;
before God was, I am.

Beside or above me
Nought is there to go;
Love or unlove me,
Unknow me or know,
I am that which unloves me and loves; I am stricken,
and I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed
And the arrows that miss,
I the mouth that is kissed
And the breath in the kiss,
The search, and the sought, and the seeker, the soul
and the body that is.

I am that thing which blesses
 My spirit elate;
 That which caresses
 With hands uncreate
 My limbs unbegotten that measure the length of the
 measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,
 Looking Godward, to cry
 "I am I, thou art thou,
 I am low, thou art high"?
 I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find thou
 but thyself, thou art I.

I the grain and the furrow,
 The plough-cloven clod
 And the ploughshare drawn thorough,
 The germ and the sod,
 The deed and the doer, the seed and the sower,
 the dust which is God.

Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,
 Child, underground?
 Fire that impassioned thee,
 Iron that bound,
 Dim changes of water, what thing of all these hast
 thou known of or found?

Canst thou say in thine heart
 Thou hast seen with thine eyes
 With what cunning of art
 Thou wast wrought in what wise,
 By what force of what stuff thou wast shapen,
 and shown on my breast to the skies?

HERTHA

Who hath given, who hath sold it thee,
 Knowledge of me ?
 Hath the wilderness told it thee ?
 Hast thou learnt of the sea ?
 Hast thou communed in spirit with night ?
 have the winds taken counsel with thee ?

Have I set such a star
 To show light on thy brow
 That thou sawest from afar
 What I show to thee now ?
 Have ye spoken as brethren together, the sun and
 the mountains and thou ?

What is here, dost thou know it ?
 What was, hast thou known ?
 Prophet nor poet
 Nor tripod nor throne
 Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but only thy
 mother alone.

Mother, not maker,
 Born, and not made ;
 Though her children forsake her,
 Allured or afraid,
 Praying prayers to the God of their fashion, she stirs
 not for all that have prayed.

A creed is a rod,
 And a crown is of night ;
 But this thing is God,
 To be man with thy might,
 To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and
 live out thy life as the light.

I am in thee to save thee,
As my soul in thee saith;
Give thou as I gave thee,
Thy life-blood and breath,
Green leaves of thy labour, white flowers of thy
thought, and red fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving
As mine were to thee;
The free life of thy living,
Be the gift of it free;
Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave, shalt
thou give thee to me.

O children of banishment,
Souls overcast,
Were the lights ye see vanish meant
Alway to last,
Ye would know not the sun overshining the shadows
and stars overpast.

I that saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadow-
less soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted
That swells to the sky
With frondage red-fruited,
The life-tree am I;
In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves: ye
shall live and not die.

HERTHA

But the Gods of your fashion
 That take and that give,
 In their pity and passion
 That scourge and forgive,
 They are worms that are bred in the bark that falls
 off; they shall die and not live.

My own blood is what stanches
 The wounds in my bark;
 Stars caught in my branches
 Make day of the dark,
 And are worshipped as suns till the sunrise shall
 tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under
 The live roots of the tree,
 In my darkness the thunder
 Makes utterance of me;
 In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear
 the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
 As his feathers are spread
 And his feet set to climb
 Through the boughs overhead,
 And my foliage rings round him and rustles, and
 branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
 Blow through me and cease,
 The war-wind that rages,
 The spring-wind of peace,
 Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one
 of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
All shadows and lights
On the world's mountain-ranges
And stream-riven heights,
Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and language
of storm-clouds on earth-shaking nights;

All forms of all faces,
All works of all hands
In unsearchable places
Of time-stricken lands,
All death and all life, and all reigns and all ruins,
drop through me as sands.

Though sore be my burden
And more than ye know,
And my growth have no guerdon
But only to grow,
Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above me or
deathworms below.

These too have their part in me,
As I too in these;
Such fire is at heart in me,
Such sap is this tree's,
Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets of infinite
lands and of seas.

In the spring-coloured hours
When my mind was as May's,
There brake forth of me flowers
By centuries of days,
Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood, shot
out from my spirit as rays.

HERTHA

And the sound of them springing
 And smell of their shoots
 Were as warmth and sweet singing
 And strength to my roots;
 And the lives of my children made perfect with
 freedom of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be;
 I have need not of prayer;
 I have need of you free
 As your mouths of mine air;
 That my heart may be greater within me, beholding
 the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is
 Of faiths ye espouse;
 In me only the root is
 That blooms in your boughs;
 Behold now your God that ye made you, to feed him
 with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening
 Abysses adored,
 With dayspring and lightning
 For lamp and for sword,
 God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red
 with the wrath of the Lord.

O my sons, O too dutiful
 Towards Gods not of me,
 Was not I enough beautiful ?
 Was it hard to be free ?
 For behold, I am with you, am in you and of you;
 look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white
with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
His anguish is here;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
Grown grey from his fear;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last
of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
Truth slays and forgives;
But to you, as time takes him,
This new thing it gives,
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon
freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
Truth only is whole,
And the love of his giving
Man's polestar and pole;
Man, pulse of my centre, and fruit of my body,
and seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom;
One beam of mine eye;
One topmost blossom
That scales the sky;
Man, equal and one with me,
man that is made of me, man that is I.

DOLORES

(NOTRE-DAME DES SEPT DOULEURS)

COLD eyelids that hide like a jewel
Hard eyes that grow soft for an hour;
The heavy white limbs, and the cruel
Red mouth like a venomous flower;
When these are gone by with their glories,
What shall rest of thee then, what remain,
O mystic and sombre Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain ?

Seven sorrows the priests give their Virgin;
But thy sins, which are seventy times seven,
Seven ages would fail thee to purge in,
And then they would haunt thee in heaven:
Fierce midnights and famishing morrows,
And the loves that complete and control
All the joys of the flesh, all the sorrows
That wear out the soul.

O garment not golden but gilded,
O garden where all men may dwell,
O tower not of ivory, but builded
By hands that reach heaven from hell;
O mystical rose of the mire,
O house not of gold but of gain,
O house of unquenchable fire,
Our Lady of Pain!

O lips full of lust and of laughter,
 Curled snakes that are fed from my breast
 Bite hard, lest remembrance come after
 And press with new lips where you pressed.
 For my heart too springs up at the pressure,
 Mine eyelids too moisten and burn;
 Ah, feed me and fill me with pleasure,
 Ere pain come in turn.

In yesterday's reach and to-morrow's,
 Out of sight though they lie of to-day,
 There have been and there yet shall be sorrows
 That smite not and bite not in play.
 The life and the love thou despisest,
 These hurt us indeed, and in vain,
 O wise among women, and wisest,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Who gave thee thy wisdom ? what stories
 That stung thee, what visions that smote ?
 Wert thou pure and a maiden, Dolores,
 When desire took thee first by the throat ?
 What bud was the shell of a blossom
 That all men may smell to and pluck ?
 What milk fed thee first at what bosom ?
 What sins gave thee suck ?

We shift and bedeck and bedrape us,
 Thou art noble and nude and antique;
 Libitina thy mother, Priapus
 Thy father, a Tuscan and Greek.
 We play with light loves in the portal,
 And wince and relent and refrain;
 Loves die, and we know thee immortal,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Fruits fail and love dies and time ranges;
 Thou art fed with perpetual breath,
 And alive after infinite changes,
 And fresh from the kisses of death;
 Of languors rekindled and rallied,
 Of barren delights and unclean,
 Things monstrous and fruitless, a pallid
 And poisonous queen.

Could you hurt me, sweet lips, though I hurt you ?
 Men touch them, and change in a trice
 The lilies and languors of virtue
 For the raptures and roses of vice;
 Those lie where thy foot on the floor is,
 These crown and caress thee and chain,
 O splendid and sterile Dolores,
 Our Lady of Pain.

There are sins it may be to discover,
 There are deeds it may be to delight.
 What new work wilt thou find for thy lover
 What new passions for daytime or night ?
 What spells that they know not a word of
 Whose lives are as leaves overblown ?
 What tortures undreamt of, unheard of,
 Unwritten, unknown ?

Ah beautiful passionate body
 That never has ached with a heart !
 On thy mouth though the kisses are bloody,
 Though they sting till it shudder and smart,
 More kind than the love we adore is,
 They hurt not the heart or the brain,
 O bitter and tender Dolores,
 Our Lady of Pain.

As our kisses relax and redouble,
 From the lips and the foam and the fangs
 Shall no new sin be born for men's trouble,
 No dream of impossible pangs ?
 With the sweet of the sins of old ages
 Wilt thou satiate thy soul as of yore ?
 Too sweet is the rind, say the sages,
 Too bitter the core.

Hast thou told all thy secrets the last time,
 And bared all thy beauties to one ?
 Ah, where shall we go then for pastime,
 If the worst that can be has been done ?
 But sweet as the rind was the core is ;
 We are fain of thee still, we are fain,
 O sanguine and subtle Dolores,
 Our Lady of Pain.

By the hunger of change and emotion,
 By the thirst of unbearable things,
 By despair, the twin-born of devotion,
 By the pleasure that winces and stings,
 The delight that consumes the desire,
 The desire that outruns the delight,
 By the cruelty deaf as a fire
 And blind as the night,

By the ravenous teeth that have smitten
 Through the kisses that blossom and bud,
 By the lips intertwisted and bitten
 Till the foam has a savour of blood,
 By the pulse as it rises and falters,
 By the hands as they slacken and strain,
 I adjure thee, respond from thine altars,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Wilt thou smile as a woman disdaining
The light fire in the veins of a boy?
But he comes to thee sad, without feigning,
Who has wearied of sorrow and joy;
Less careful of labour and glory
Than the elders whose hair has uncurled;
And young, but with fancies as hoary
And grey as the world.

I have passed from the outermost portal
To the shrine where a sin is a prayer;
What care though the service be mortal?
O our lady of Torture, what care?
All thine the last wine that I pour is,
The last in the chalice we drain,
O fierce and luxurious Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

All thine the new wine of desire,
The fruit of four lips as they clung
Till the hair and the eyelids took fire,
The foam of a serpentine tongue,
The froth of the serpents of pleasure,
More salt than the foam of the sea,
Now felt as a flame, now at leisure
As wine shed for me.

Ah thy people, thy children, thy chosen,
Marked cross from the womb and perverse,
They have found out the secret to cozen
The gods that constrain us and curse;
They alone, they are wise, and none other;
Give me place, even me, in their train,
O my sister, my spouse, and my mother,
Our Lady of Pain.

For the crown of our life as it closes
Is darkness, the fruit thereof dust;
No thorns go as deep as a rose's,
And love is more cruel than lust.
Time turns the old days to derision,
Our loves into corpses or wives;
And marriage and death and division
Make barren our lives.

And pale from the past we draw nigh thee,
And satiate with comfortless hours;
And we know thee, how all men belie thee,
And we gather the fruit of thy flowers;
The passion that slays and recovers,
The pangs and the kisses that rain
On the lips and the limbs of thy lovers,
Our Lady of Pain.

The desire of thy furious embraces
Is more than the wisdom of years,
On the blossom though blood lie in traces,
Though the foliage be sodden with tears.
For the lords in whose keeping the door is
That opens on all who draw breath
Gave the cypress to love, my Dolores,
The myrtle to death.

And they laughed, changing hands in the measure,
And they mixed and made peace after strife;
Pain melted in tears, and was pleasure;
Death tingled with blood, and was life.
Like lovers they melted and tingled,
In the dusk of thine innermost fane;
In the darkness they murmured and mingled,
Our Lady of Pain.

In a twilight where virtues are vices,
In thy chapels, unknown of the sun,
To a tune that entralls and entices,
They were wed, and the twain were as one.
For the tune from thine altar hath sounded
Since God bade the world's work begin,
And the fume of thine incense abounded,
To sweeten the sin.

Love listens, and paler than ashes,
Through his curls as the crown on them slips,
Lifts languid wet eyelids and lashes,
And laughs with insatiable lips.
Thou shalt hush him with heavy caresses,
With music that scares the profane;
Thou shalt darken his eyes with thy tresses,
Our Lady of Pain.

Thou shalt blind his bright eyes though he wrestle,
Thou shalt chain his light limbs though he strive;
In his lips all thy serpents shall nestle,
In his hands all thy cruelties thrive.
In the daytime thy voice shall go through him,
In his dreams he shall feel thee and ache;
Thou shalt kindle by night and subdue him
Asleep and awake.

Thou shalt touch and make redder his roses
With juice not of fruit nor of bud;
When the sense in the spirit reposes,
Thou shalt quicken the soul through the blood.
Thine, thine the one grace we implore is,
Who would live and not languish or feign,
O sleepless and deadly Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

Dost thou dream, in a respite of slumber,
 In a lull of the fires of thy life,
 Of the days without name, without number,
 When thy will stung the world into strife;
 When, a goddess, the pulse of thy passion
 Smote kings as they revelled in Rome;
 And they hailed thee re-risen, O Thalassian,
 Foam-white, from the foam ?

When thy lips had such lovers to flatter,
 When the city lay red from thy rods,
 And thine hands were as arrows to scatter
 The children of change and their gods;
 When the blood of thy foemen made fervent
 A sand never moist from the main,
 As one smote them, their lord and thy servant,
 Our Lady of Pain.

On sands by the storm never shaken,
 Nor wet from the washing of tides;
 Nor by foam of the waves overtaken,
 Nor winds that the thunder bestrides;
 But red from the print of thy paces,
 Made smooth for the world and its lords,
 Ringed round with a flame of fair faces,
 And splendid with swords.

There the gladiator, pale for thy pleasure,
 Drew bitter and perilous breath;
 There torments laid hold on the treasure
 Of limbs too delicious for death;
 When thy gardens were lit with live torches;
 When the world was a steed for thy rein;
 When the nations lay prone in thy porches,
 Our Lady of Pain.

When, with flame all around him aspirant,
 Stood flushed, as a harp-player stands,
The implacable beautiful tyrant,
 Rose-crowned, having death in his hands;
And a sound as the sound of loud water
 Smote far through the flight of the fires,
And mixed with the lightning of slaughter
 A thunder of lyres.

Dost thou dream of what was and no more is,
 The old kingdoms of earth and the kings ?
Dost thou hunger for these things, Dolores,
 For these, in a world of new things ?
But thy bosom no fasts could emaciate,
 No hunger compel to complain
Those lips that no bloodshed could satiate,
 Our Lady of Pain.

As of old when the world's heart was lighter,
 Through thy garments the grace of thee glows,
The white wealth of thy body made whiter
 By the blushes of amorous blows,
And seamed with sharp lips and fierce fingers,
 And branded by kisses that bruise;
When all shall be gone that now lingers,
 Ah, what shall we lose ?

Thou wert fair in the fearless old fashion,
 And thy limbs are as melodies yet,
And move to the music of passion
 With lithe and lascivious regret.
What ailed us, O gods, to desert you
 For creeds that refuse and restrain ?
Come down and redeem us from virtue,
 Our Lady of Pain.

All shrines that were Vestal are flameless;
 But the flame has not fallen from this;
 Though obscure be the god, and though nameless
 The eyes and the hair that we kiss;
 Low fires that love sits by and forges
 Fresh heads for his arrows and thine;
 Hair loosened and soiled in mid orgies
 With kisses and wine.

Thy skin changes country and colour,
 And shrivels or swells to a snake's.
 Let it brighten and bloat and grow duller,
 We know it, the flames and the flakes,
 Red brands on it smitten and bitten,
 Round skies where a star is a stain,
 And the leaves with thy litanies written,
 Our Lady of Pain.

On thy bosom though many a kiss be,
 There are none such as knew it of old.
 Was it Alciphron once or Arisbe,
 Male ringlets or feminine gold,
 That thy lips met with under the statue,
 Whence a look shot out sharp after thieves
 From the eyes of the garden-god at you
 Across the fig-leaves ?

Then still, through dry seasons and moister,
 One god had a wreath to his shrine;
 Then love was the pearl of his oyster,¹
 And Venus rose red out of wine.
 We have all done amiss, choosing rather
 Such loves as the wise gods disdain;
 Intercede for us thou with thy father,
 Our Lady of Pain.

¹ Nam te præcipue in suis urbibus colit ora
 Hellespontia, cæteris ostreosior oris.—CATULL., *Carm. xviii.*

In spring he had crowns of his garden,
Red corn in the heat of the year,
Then hoary green olives that harden
When the grape-blossom freezes with fear;
And milk-budded myrtles with Venus
And vine-leaves with Bacchus he trod;
And ye said, " We have seen, he hath seen us,
A visible God."

What broke off the garlands that girt you ?
What sundered you spirit and clay ?
Weak sins yet alive are as virtue
To the strength of the sins of that day.
For dried is the blood of thy lover,
Ipsithilla, contracted the vein;
Cry aloud, " Will he rise and recover,
Our Lady of Pain ? "

Cry aloud; for the old world is broken:
Cry out; for the Phrygian is priest,
And rears not the bountiful token
And spreads not the fatherly feast.
From the midmost of Ida, from shady
Recesses that murmur at morn,
They have brought and baptized her, Our Lady,
A goddess new-born.

And the chaplets of old are above us,
And the oyster-bed teems out of reach;
Old poets outsing and outlove us,
And Catullus makes mouths at our speech.
Who shall kiss, in thy father's own city,
With such lips as he sang with, again ?
Intercede for us all of thy pity,
Our Lady of Pain.

Out of Dindymus heavily laden
 Her lions draw bound and unfed
 A mother, a mortal, a maiden,
 A queen over death and the dead.
 She is cold, and her habit is lowly,
 Her temple of branches and sods;
 Most fruitful and virginal, holy,
 A mother of gods.

She hath wasted with fire thine high places,
 She hath hidden and marred and made sad
 The fair limbs of the Loves, the fair faces
 Of gods that were goodly and glad.
 She slays, and her hands are not bloody;
 She moves as a moon in the wane,
 White-robed, and thy raiment is ruddy,
 Our Lady of Pain.

They shall pass and their places be taken,
 The gods and the priests that are pure.
 They shall pass, and shalt thou not be shaken?
 They shall perish, and shalt thou endure?
 Death laughs, breathing close and relentless
 In the nostrils and eyelids of lust,
 With a pinch in his fingers of scentless
 And delicate dust.

But the worm shall revive thee with kisses;
 Thou shalt change and transmute as a god,
 As the rod to a serpent that hisses,
 As the serpent again to a rod.
 Thy life shall not cease though thou doff it;
 Thou shalt live until evil be slain,
 And good shall die first, said thy prophet,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Did he lie ? did he laugh ? does he know it,
 Now he lies out of reach, out of breath,
 Thy prophet, thy preacher, thy poet,
 Sin's child by incestuous Death ?
 Did he find out in fire at his waking,
 Or discern as his eyelids lost light,
 When the bands of the body were breaking
 And all came in sight ?

Who has known all the evil before us,
 Or the tyrannous secrets of time ?
 Though we match not the dead men that bore us
 At a song, at a kiss, at a crime—
 Though the heathen outface and outlive us,
 And our lives and our longings are twain—
 Ah, forgive us our virtues, forgive us,
 Our Lady of Pain.

Who are we that embalm and embrace thee
 With spices and savours of song ?
 What is time, that his children should face thee ?
 What am I, that my lips do thee wrong ?
 I could hurt thee—but pain would delight thee;
 Or caress thee—but love would repel;
 And the lovers whose lips would excite thee
 Are serpents in hell.

Who now shall content thee as they did,
 Thy lovers, when temples were built
 And the hair of the sacrifice braided
 And the blood of the sacrifice spilt,
 In Lampsacus fervent with faces,
 In Aphaca red from thy reign,
 Who embraced thee with awful embraces,
 Our Lady of Pain ?

Where are they, Cotytto or Venus,
 Astarte or Ashtaroth, where ?
 Do their hands as we touch come between us ?
 Is the breath of them hot in thy hair ?
 From their lips have thy lips taken fever,
 With the blood of their bodies grown red ?
 Hast thou left upon earth a believer
 If these men are dead ?

They were purple of raiment and golden,
 Filled full of thee, fiery with wine,
 Thy lovers, in haunts un beholden,
 In marvellous chambers of thine.
 They are fled, and their footprints escape us,
 Who appraise thee, adore, and abstain,
 O daughter of Death and Priapus,
 Our Lady of Pain.

What ails us to fear overmeasure,
 To praise thee with timorous breath,
 O mistress and mother of pleasure,
 The one thing as certain as death ?
 We shall change as the things that we cherish,
 Shall fade as they faded before,
 As foam upon water shall perish,
 As sand upon shore.

We shall know what the darkness discovers
 If the grave-pit be shallow or deep;
 And our fathers of old, and our lovers,
 We shall know if they sleep not or sleep.
 We shall see whether hell be not heaven,
 Find out whether tares be not grain,
 And the joys of thee seventy times seven
 Our Lady of Pain.

ITYLUS

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring ?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow ?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing ?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed ?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set ?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow ?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth ?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget ?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south ;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
 Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
 How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet ?
 For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
 Till life forget and death remember,
 Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
 I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
 Hast thou the heart ? is it all past over ?
 Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
 And fair the feet of thy lover the spring :
 But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover ?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
 My heart in me is a molten ember
 And over my head the waves have met.
 But thou wouldest tarry or I would follow,
 Could I forget or thou remember,
 Couldst thou remember and I forgot.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
 The heart's division divideth us.
 Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree ;
 But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
 To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
 The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
 I pray thee sing not a little space.
 Are not the roofs and the lintels wet ?
 The woven web that was plain to follow,
 The small slain body, the flowerlike face,
 Can I remember if thou forget ?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow,
 The voice of the child's blood crying yet
" Who hath remembered me ? who hath forgotten ? "
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
 But the world shall end when I forget.

TO WALT WHITMAN
IN AMERICA

SEND but a song oversea for us,
Heart of their hearts who are free,
Heart of their singer, to be for us
More than our singing can be;
Ours, in the tempest at error,
With no light but the twilight of terror;
Send us a song oversea!

Sweet-smelling of pine-leaves and grasses,
And blown as a tree through and through
With the winds of the keen mountain-passes,
And tender as sun-smitten dew;
Sharp-tongued as the winter that shakes
The wastes of your limitless lakes,
Wide-eyed as the sea-line's blue.

O strong-winged soul with prophetic
Lips hot with the bloodbeats of song,
With tremor of heartstrings magnetic,
With thoughts as thunders in throng,
With consonant ardours of chords
That pierce men's souls as with swords
And hale them hearing along,

Make us too music, to be with us
As a word from a world's heart warm,
To sail the dark as a sea with us,
Full-sailed, outsinging the storm,
A song to put fire in our ears
Whose burning shall burn up tears,
Whose sign bid battle reform;

A note in the ranks of a clarion,
A word in the wind of cheer,
To consume as with lightning the carrion
That makes time foul for us here;
In the air that our dead things infest
A blast of the breath of the west,
Till east way as west way is clear.

Out of the sun beyond sunset,
From the evening whence morning shall be,
With the rollers in measureless onset,
With the van of the storming sea,
With the world-wide wind, with the breath
That breaks ships driven upon death,
With the passion of all things free,

With the sea-steeds footless and frantic,
White myriads for death to bestride
In the charge of the ruining Atlantic
Where deaths by regiments ride,
With clouds and clamours of waters,
With a long note shriller than slaughter's
On the furrowless fields world-wide,

With terror, with ardour and wonder,
With the soul of the season that wakes
When the weight of a whole year's thunder
In the tidestream of autumn breaks,
Let the flight of the wide-winged word
Come over, come in and be heard,
Take form and fire for our sakes.

For a continent bloodless with travail
Here toils and brawls as it can,
And the web of it who shall unravel
Of all that peer on the plan;
Would fain grow men, but they grow not,
And fain be free, but they know not
One name for freedom and man?

One name, not twain for division;
One thing, not twain, from the birth;
Spirit and substance and vision,
Worth more than worship is worth;
Unbeheld, unadored, undivined,
The cause, the centre, the mind,
The secret and sense of the earth.

Here as a weakling in irons,
Here as a weanling in bands,
As a prey that the stake-net environs,
Our life that we looked for stands;
And the man-child naked and dear,
Democracy, turns on us here
Eyes trembling with tremulous hands.

It sees not what season shall bring to it
 Sweet fruit of its bitter desire;
 Few voices it hears yet sing to it,
 Few pulses of hearts reaspire;
 Foresees not time, nor forehears
 The noises of imminent years,
 Earthquake, and thunder, and fire:

When crowned and weaponed and curbless
 It shall walk without helm or shield
 The bare burnt furrows and herbless
 Of war's last flame-stricken field,
 Till godlike, equal with time,
 It stand in the sun sublime,
 In the godhead of man revealed.

Round your people and over them
 Light like raiment is drawn,
 Close as a garment to cover them
 Wrought not of mail nor of lawn;
 Here, with hope hardly to wear,
 Naked nations and bare
 Swim, sink, strike out for the dawn.

Chains are here, and a prison,
 Kings, and subjects, and shame;
 If the God upon you be arisen,
 How should our songs be the same?
 How, in confusion of change,
 How shall we sing, in a strange
 Land, songs praising his name?

God is buried and dead to us,
Even the spirit of earth,
Freedom; so have they said to us,
Some with mocking and mirth,
Some with heartbreak and tears;
And a God without eyes, without ears,
Who shall sing of him, dead in the birth ?

The earth-god Freedom, the lonely
Face lightening, the footprint unshod,
Not as one man crucified only
Nor scourged with but one life's rod;
The soul that is substance of nations,
Reincarnate with fresh generations;
The great god Man, which is God.

But in weariest of years and obscurest
Doth it live not at heart of all things,
Th^e one God and one spirit, a purest
Life, fed from unstanchable springs ?
Within love, within hatred it is,
And its seed in the stripe as the kiss,
And in slaves is the germ, and in kings.

Freedom we call it, for holier
Name of the soul's there is none;
Surelier it labours, if slowlier,
Than the metres of star or of sun;
Slowlier than life into breath,
Surelier than time into death,
It moves till its labour be done.

148 TO WALT WHITMAN IN AMERICA

Till the motion be done and the measure
Circling through season and clime,
Slumber and sorrow and pleasure,
Vision of virtue and crime;
Till consummate with conquering eyes,
A soul disembodied, it rise
From the body transfigured of time.

Till it rise and remain and take station
With the stars of the worlds that rejoice;
Till the voice of its heart's exultation
Be as theirs an invariable voice;
By no discord of evil estranged,
By no pause, by no breach in it changed,
By no clash in the chord of its choice.

It is one with the world's generations,
With the spirit, the star, and the sod;
With the kingless and king-stricken nations,
With the cross, and the chain, and the rod;
The most high, the most secret, most lonely,
The earth-soul Freedom, that only
Lives, and that only is God.

THE SONG OF THE STANDARD

M AIDEN most beautiful, mother most bountiful,
lady of lands,
Queen and republican, crowned of the centuries whose
years are thy sands,
See for thy sake what we bring to thee, Italy, here
in our hands.

This is the banner thy gonfalon, fair in the front of
thy fight,
Red from the hearts that were pierced for thee, white
as thy mountains are white,
Green as the spring of thy soul everlasting, whose
life-blood is light.

Take to thy bosom thy banner, a fair bird fit for
the nest,
Feathered for flight into sunrise or sunset, for east-
ward or west,
Fledged for the flight everlasting, but held yet warm
to thy breast.

Gather it close to thee, song-bird or storm-bearer,
eagle or dove,
Lift it to sunward, a beacon beneath to the beacon
above,
Green as our hope in it, white as our faith in it, red
as our love.

Thunder and splendour of lightning are hid in the
folds of it furled;
Who shall unroll it but thou, as thy bolt to be handled
and hurled,
Out of whose lips is the honey, whose bosom the milk
of the world?

Out of thine hands hast thou fed us with pasture of
colour and song;
Glory and beauty by birthright to thee as thy gar-
ments belong;
Out of thine hands thou shalt give us as surely de-
liverance from wrong.

Out of thine eyes thou hast shed on us love as a lamp
in our night,
Wisdom a lodestar to ships, and remembrance a
flame-coloured light;
Out of thine eyes thou shalt show us as surely the sun-
dawn of right.

Turn to us, speak to us, Italy, mother, but once and
a word,
None shall not follow thee, none shall not serve thee,
not one that has heard;
Twice hast thou spoken a message, and time is athirst
for the third.

Kingdom and empire of peoples thou hadst, and thy
lordship made one
North sea and south sea and east men and west men
that look on the sun;
Spirit was in thee and counsel, when soul in the
nations was none.

Ah, by the faith and the hope and the love that have
need of thee now,
Shines not thy face with the forethought of freedom,
and burns not thy brow ?
Who is against her but all men ? and who is beside
her but thou ?

Art thou not better than all men? and where shall
she turn but to thee?
Lo, not a breath, not a beam, not a beacon from
midland to sea;
Freedom cries out for a sign among nations. and
none will be free.

Green thing to green in the summer makes answer,
and rose-tree to rose;
Lily by lily the year becomes perfect; and none of us
knows
What thing is fairest of all things on earth as it
brightens and blows.

This thing is fairest in all time of all things, in all
time is best—
Freedom, that made thee, our mother, and suckled
her sons at thy breast;
Take to thy bosom the nations, and there shall the
world come to rest.

A LEAVE-TAKING

LET us go hence, my songs; she will not hear.
Let us go hence together without fear;
Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,
And over all old things and all things dear.
She loves not you nor me as all we love her.
Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part; she will not know.
Let us go seaward as the great winds go,
Full of blown sand and foam; what help is here?
There is no help, for all these things are so,
And all the world is bitter as a tear.
And how these things are, though ye strove to show,
She would not know.

Let us go home and hence; she will not weep.
We gave love many dreams and days to keep,
Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,
Saying, " If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle and reap."
All is reaped now; no grass is left to mow;
And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,
She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest; she will not love.
She shall not hear us if we sing hereof,
Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.
Come hence, let be, lie still; it is enough.
Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep;
And though she saw all heaven in flower above,
She would not love.

A LEAVE-TAKING

Let us give up, go down; she will not care.
Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
And the sea moving saw before it move
One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair;
Though all those waves went over us, and drove
Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair,
She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence; she will not see.
Sing all once more together; surely she,
She, too, remembering days and words that were,
Will turn a little toward us, sighing; but we,
We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not
been there.
Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
She would not see.

A WASTED VIGIL

COULDST thou not watch with me one hour ?
Behold,
Dawn skims the sea with flying feet of gold,
With sudden feet that graze the gradual sea;
Couldst thou not watch with me ?

What not one hour ? for star by star the night
Falls, and her thousands world by world take flight;
They die, and day survives, and what of thee ?
Couldst thou not watch with me ?

Lo, far in heaven the web of night undone,
And on the sudden sea the gradual sun;
Wave to wave answers, tree responds to tree;
Couldst thou not watch with me ?

Sunbeam by sunbeam creeps from line to line,
Foam by foam quickens on the brightening brine;
Sail by sail passes, flower by flower gets free;
Couldst thou not watch with me ?

Last year, a brief while since, an age ago,
A whole year past, with bud and bloom and snow,
A moon that wast in heaven, what friends were we !
Couldst thou not watch with me ?

Old moons, and last year's flowers, and last year's
snows!

Who now saith to thee, moon? or who saith, rose?
O dust and ashes, once found fair to see!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

O dust and ashes, once thought sweet to smell!
With me it is not, is it with thee well?
O sea-drift blown from windward back to lee!
Couldst thou not watch with me?

The old year's dead hands are full of their dead flowers,
The old days are full of dead old loves of ours,
Born as a rose, and briefer born than she;
Couldst thou not watch with me?

Could two days live again of that dead year,
One would say, seeking us and passing here,
"Where is she?" and one answering, "Where is he?"
Couldst thou not watch with me?

Nay, those two lovers are not anywhere;
If we were they, none knows us what we were,
Nor aught of all their barren grief and glee.
Couldst thou not watch with me?

Half false, half fair, all feeble, be my verse
Upon thee not for blessing nor for curse
For some must stand, and some must fall or flee;
Couldst thou not watch with me?

As a new moon above spent stars thou wast;
But stars endure after the moon is past.
Couldst thou not watch one hour, though I watch three?
Couldst thou not watch with me ?

What of the night ? The night is full, the tide
Storms inland, the most ancient rocks divide;
Yet some endure, and bow nor head nor knee;
Couldst thou not watch with me ?

Since thou art not as these are, go thy ways;
Thou hast no part in all my nights and days.
Lie still, sleep on, be glad—as such things be;
Thou couldst not watch with me.

BETWEEN THE SUNSET AND THE SEA

BETWEEN the sunset and the sea
My love laid hands and lips on me;
Of sweet came sour, of day came night,
Of long desire came brief delight:
Ah love, and what thing came of thee
Between the sea-downs and the sea ?

Between the sea-mark and the sea
Joy grew to grief, grief grew to me;
Love turned to tears, and tears to fire,
And dead delight to new desire;
Love's talk, love's touch there seemed to be
Between the sea-sand and the sea.

Between the sundown and the sea
Love watched one hour of love with me;
Then down the all-golden water-ways
His feet flew after yesterdays;
I saw them come and saw them flee
Between the sea-foam and the sea.

Between the sea-strand and the sea
Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me;
The first star saw twain turn to one
Between the moonrise and the sun;
The next, that saw not love, saw me
Between the sea-banks and the sea.

LOVE AND SLEEP

I

LET me forget a little space,
O love, let love forget!
Or, if love will not let,
Blind thou with hair and hands his eyes and face;
Blind him and bind him, Memory, tho' he fret,
And weep, and shift his place.

Thou seest how well the old loves sleep,
Each in a small sweet bed,
With flowers at foot and head,
Made out of griefs not grown enough to weep,
And joys so young their lips are hardly red,
And their hearts hardly leap.

Watch lest they wake, sweet Memory; set
A seal upon thy breath,
As one that sorroweth;
And hide thine eyes, and thou too shalt forget;
And sleep shall lead love by the hand to death,
And life be quiet yet.

II

Hide thine eyes for all their light,
Lest they come to weep;
Who shall say if day or night
Be the best for sleep?

If by day they wake,
Sorrow surely shall they see;
And for sorrow's sake
Joyless all their joy shall be.

Sun shall set and moon shall rise
Till the end of years,
But by night were never eyes
Watched and shed not tears.

Look not forth to find
Where thou never shalt find rest,
Lest thine eyes wax blind,
Love is good, but sleep is best.

MADONNA MIA

UNDER green apple-boughs
That never a storm will rouse,
My lady hath her house
Between two bowers;
In either of the twain
Red roses full of rain;
She hath for bondwomen
All kind of flowers.

She hath no handmaid fair
To draw her curled gold hair
Through rings of gold that bear
Her whole hair's weight;
She hath no maids to stand
Gold-clothed on either hand;
In all the great green land
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear
But one white hood of vair
Drawn over eyes and hair,
Wrought with strange gold,
Made for some great queen's head,
Some fair great queen since dead;
And one strait gown of red
Against the cold.

MADONNA MIA

Beneath her eyelids deep
 Love lying seems asleep,
 Love, swift to wake, to weep,
 To laugh, to gaze;
 Her breasts are like white birds,
 And all her gracious words
 As water-grass to herds
 In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall
 And rains are musical;
 Her flowers are fed from all,
 Her joy from these;
 In the deep-feathered firs
 Their gift of joy is hers,
 In the least breath that stirs
 Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,
 Ripens with reddest sheaves,
 Forgets, remembers, grieves,
 And is not sad;
 The quiet lands and skies
 Leave light upon her eyes;
 None knows her, weak or wise,
 Or tired or glad.

None knows, none understands,
 What flowers are like her hands;
 Though you should search all lands
 Wherein time grows,
 What snows are like her feet,
 Though his eyes burn with heat
 Through gazing on my sweet,
 Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said;
That white and gold and red,
God's three chief words, man's bread
 And oil and wine,
Were given her for dowers,
And kingdom of all hours,
And grace of goodly flowers
 And various vine.

This is my lady's praise:
God after many days
Wrought her in unknown ways,
 In sunset lands;
This was my lady's birth;
God gave her might and mirth
And laid his whole sweet earth
 Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs
My lady hath her house;
She wears upon her brows
 The flower thereof;
All saying but what God saith
To her is as vain breath;
She is more strong than death,
 Being strong as love.

AVE ATQUE VALE

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Nous devrions pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs ;
Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,
Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,
Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marmes,
Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

Les Fleurs du Mal

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
Brother, on this that was the veil of thee ?
Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,
Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
Such as the summer-sleepy Dryads weave,
Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve ?
Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
Trod by no tropic feet ?

For always thee the fervid languid glories
Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies ;
Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
Ah, salt and sterile as her kisses were,
The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,
Blind gods that cannot spare.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
 Secrets and sorrows unheheld of us:
 Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
 Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime;
 The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech;
 And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
 Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep;
And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
 Seeing as men sow men reap.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul unsleeping,
 That were athirst for sleep and no more life
 And no more love, for peace and no more strife!
Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping
 Spirit and body and all the springs of song,
 Is it well now where love can do no wrong,
Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang
 Behind the unopening closure of her lips?
 Is it not well where soul from body slips
And flesh from bone divides without a pang
 As dew from flower-bell drips?

It is enough; the end and the beginning
Are one thing to thee, who art past the end.
O hand unclasped of un beholden friend,
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning,
No triumph and no labour and no lust,
Only dead yew-leaves and a little dust.
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith nought,
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night
With obscure finger silences your sight,
Nor in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought,
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over,
Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great knees and feet
Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,
Such as thy vision here solicited,
Under the shadow of her fair vast head,
The deep division of prodigious breasts,
The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that still keep
The savour and shade of old-world pine-forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep ?

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any prayer.
What ails us with thee, who art wind and air ?
What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow ?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire,
Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find.
Still, and more swift than they, the thin flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

Not thee, O never thee, in all time's changes,
Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul,
The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll
I lay my hand on, and not death estranges
My spirit from communion of thy song—
These memories and these melodies that throng
Veiled porches of a Muse funereal—
These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold
As though a hand were in my hand to hold,
Or through mine ears a mourning musical
Of many mourners rolled.

I among these, I also, in such station

As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods,
And offering to the dead made, and their gods,
The old mourners had, standing to make libation,
I stand, and to the gods and to the dead
Do reverence without prayer or praise, and shed
Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,
And what of honey and spice my seedlands bear,
And what I may of fruits in this chilled air,
And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,

Not like the low-lying head of Him, the King,
The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing,
Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could quicken.
There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear
Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poets' pages.
Thee not Orestes, not Electra mourns;
But bending us-ward with memorial urns
The most high Muses that fulfil all ages
Weep, and our God's heart yearns.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
Among us darkling here the lord of light
Makes manifest his music and his might
In hearts that open and in lips that soften
With the soft flame and heat of songs that shine.
Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine,
And nourished them indeed with bitter bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food came,
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed
Who feeds our hearts with fame.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunsetting,
God of all suns and songs, he too bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art,
Compassionate, with sad and sacred heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the last dead,
And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.

And one weeps with him in the ways Lethean,
And stains with tears her changing bosom chill:
That obscure Venus of the hollow hill,
That thing transformed which was the Cytherean,
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine
Long since, and face no more called Erycine;
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.
Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell
Did she, a sad and second prey, compel
Into the footless places once more trod,
And shadows hot from hell.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit sick with perfume and sweet night
And love's tired eyes and hands and barren bosom.
There is no help for these things; none to mend
And none to mar; not all our songs, O friend,
Will make death clear or make life durable.
Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild vine
And with wild notes about this dust of thine
At least I fill the place where white dreams dwell
And wreath an unseen shrine.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon,
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and to forgive.
Out of the mystic and the mournful garden
Where all day through thine hands in barren braid
Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and shade,
Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants grey,
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, sanguine-
hearted,
Passions that sprang from sleep and thoughts
that started,
Shall death not bring us all as thee one day
Among the days departed?

For thee, O now a silent soul, my brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and farewell.
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry smell,
And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
With sadder than the Niobean womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done;
There lies not any troublous thing before,
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore.

IN MEMORY OF BARRY
CORNWALL (Oct. 4, 1874)

IN the garden of death, where the singers whose
names are deathless
One with another make music unheard of men,
Where the dead sweet roses fade not of lips long
breathless,
And the fair eyes shine that shall weep not or
change again,
Who comes now crowned with the blossom of snow-
white years?
What music is this that the world of the dead men
hears?

Beloved of men, whose words on our lips were
honey,
Whose name in our ears and our fathers' ears was
sweet,
Like summer gone forth of the land his songs made
sunny,
To the beautiful veiled bright world where the glad
ghosts meet,
Child, father, bridegroom and bride, and anguish
and rest,
No soul shall pass of a singer than this more blest.

Blest for the years' sweet sake that were filled and
brightened,
As a forest with birds, with the fruit and the flower
of his song;
For the souls' sake blest that heard, and their cares
were lightened,
For the hearts' sake blest that have fostered his
name so long;
By the living and dead lips blest that have loved his
name,
And clothed with their praise and crowned with their
love for fame.

Ah, fair and fragrant his fame as flowers that close
not,
That shrink not by day for heat or for cold by
night,
As a thought in the heart shall increase when the
heart's self knows not,
Shall endure in our ears as a sound, in our eyes as
a light;
Shall wax with the years that wane and the seasons'
chime,
As a white rose thornless that grows in the garden
of time.

The same year calls, and one goes hence with
another,
And men sit sad that were glad for their sweet
songs' sake;
The same year beckons, and elder with younger
brother
Takes mutely the cup from his hand that we all
shall take.¹
They pass ere the leaves be past or the snows be
come;
And the birds are loud, but the lips that outsang them
dumb.

Time takes them home that we loved, fair names and
famous,
To the soft long sleep, to the broad sweet bosom
of death;
But the flower of their souls he shall take not away
to shame us,
Nor the lips lack song for ever that now lack
breath.
For with us shall the music and perfume that die not
dwell,
Though the dead to our dead bid welcome, and we
farewell.

¹ Sydney Dobell died August 22, 1874.

DEDICATION : 1865

THE sea gives her shells to the shingle,
The earth gives her streams to the sea;
They are many, but my gift is single,
My verses, the firstfruits of me.
Let the wind take the green and the grey leaf
Cast forth without fruit upon air;
Take rose-leaf and vine-leaf and bay-leaf
Blown loose from the hair.

The night shakes them round me in legions,
Dawn drives them before her like dreams;
Time sheds them like snows on strange regions
Swept shoreward on infinite streams;
Leaves pallid and sombre and ruddy,
Dead fruits of the fugitive years;
Some stained as with wine and made bloody,
And some as with tears.

Some scattered in seven years' traces,
As they fell from the boy that was then;
Long left among idle green places,
Or gathered but now among men;
On seas full of wonder and peril,
Blown white round the capes of the north;
Or in islands where myrtles are sterile
And loves bring not forth.

O daughters of dreams and of stories
 That life is not wearied of yet,
Faustine, Fragoletta, Dolores,
 Félide and Yolande and Juliette,
 Shall I find you not still, shall I miss you,
 When sleep, that is true or that seems,
 Comes back to me hopeless to kiss you,
 O daughters of dreams ?

They are past as a slumber that passes,
 As the dew of a dawn of old time;
 More frail than the shadows on glasses,
 More fleet than a wave or a rhyme.
 As the waves after ebb drawing seaward,
 When their hollows are full of the night
 So the birds that flew singing to me-ward
 Recede out of sight.

The songs of dead seasons, that wander
 On wings of articulate words;
 Lost leaves that the shore-wind may squander
 Light flocks of untameable birds;
 Some sang to me dreaming in class-time
 And truant in hand as in tongue;
 For the youngest were born of boy's pastime,
 The eldest are young.

Is there shelter while life in them lingers,
 Is there hearing for songs that recede,
 Tunes touched from a harp with man's fingers
 Or blown with boy's mouth in a reed ?
 Is there place in the land of your labour,
 Is there room in your world of delight,
 Where change has not sorrow for neighbour
 And day has not night ?

DEDICATION

In their wings though the sea-wind yet quivers
 Will you spare not a space for them there
 Made green with the running of rivers
 And gracious with temperate air;
 In the fields and the turreted cities,
 That cover from sunshine and rain
 Fair passions and bountiful pities
 And loves without stain?

In a land of clear colours and stories,
 In a region of shadowless hours,
 Where earth has a garment of glories
 And a murmur of musical flowers;
 In woods where the spring half uncovers
 The flush of her amorous face,
 By the waters that listen for lovers,
 For these is there place?

For the song-birds of sorrow, that muffle
 Their music as clouds do their fire:
 For the storm-birds of passion, that ruffle
 Wild wings in a wind of desire;
 In the stream of the storm as it settles
 Blown seaward, borne far from the sun,
 Shaken loose on the darkness like petals
 Dropt one after one?

Though the world of your hands be more gracious
 And lovelier in lordship of things
 Clothed round by sweet art with the spacious
 Warm heaven of her imminent wings,
 Let them enter, unfledged and nigh fainting,
 For the love of old loves and lost times;
 And receive in your palace of painting
 This revel of rhymes.

Though the seasons of man full of losses
 Make empty the years full of youth,
If but one thing be constant in crosses,
 Change lays not her hand upon truth;
Hopes die, and their tombs are for token
 That the grief as the joy of them ends
Ere time that breaks all men has broken
 The faith between friends.

Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
 There is help if the heaven has one;
Though the skies be discrowned of the sunlight
 And the earth dispossessed of the sun,
They have moonlight and sleep for repayment,
 When, refreshed as a bride and set free,
With stars and sea-winds in her raiment,
 Night sinks on the sea.

AT PARTING

FOR a day and a night Love sang to us, played with
us,

Folded us round from the dark and the light;
And our hearts were fulfilled of the music he made
with us,
Made with our hearts and our lips while he stayed
with us,
Stayed in mid-passage his pinions from flight
For a day and a night.

From his foes that kept watch with his wings had he
hidden us,

Covered us close from the eyes that would smite,
From the feet that had tracked and the tongues that
had chidden us,
Sheltering in shade of the myrtles forbidden us,
Spirit and flesh growing one with delight
For a day and a night.

But his wings will not rest and his feet will not stay
for us:

Morning is here in the joy of its might;
With his breath has he sweetened a night and a day
for us;
Now let him pass, and the myrtles make way for us;
Love can but last in us here at his height
For a day and a night.

SONG

LOVE laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rosy bed;
And his eyes with tears were red,
And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn
Kept watch by his head forlorn,
Till the night was overworn
And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day
And kissed Love's lips as he lay,
And the watchers ghostly and grey
Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew bright,
And his lips waxed ruddy as light:
Sorrow may reign for a night,
But day shall bring back delight.

GRACE DARLING

TAKE, O star of all our seas, from not an alien hand,
Homage paid of song bowed down before thy glory's face,
Thou the living light of all our lovely stormy strand,
Thou the brave north-country's very glory of glories, Grace.

Loud and dark about the lighthouse rings and glares
the night;
Glares with foam-lit gloom and darkling fire of
storm and spray,
Rings with roar of winds in chase and rage of waves
in flight,
Howls and hisses as with mouths of snakes and
wolves at bay.
Scarce the cliffs of the islets, scarce the walls of
Joyous Gard,
Flash to sight between the deadlier lightnings of
the sea:
Storm is lord and master of a midnight evil-starred,
Nor may sight or fear discern what evil stars may be.
Dark as death and white as snow the sea-swell
scowls and shines,
Heaves and yearns and pants for prey, from ravening lip to lip,

Strong in rage of rapturous anguish, lines on hurt-
ling lines,
Ranks on charging ranks, that break and rend the
battling ship.
All the night is mad and murderous: who shall front
the night?
Not the prow that labours, helpless as a storm-
blown leaf,
Where the rocks and waters, darkling depth and
beetling height,
Rage with wave on shattering wave and thundering
reef on reef.
Death is fallen upon the prisoners there of darkness,
bound
Like as thralls with links of iron fast in bonds of
doom;
How shall any way to break the bands of death be
found,
Any hand avail to pluck them from that raging
tomb?
All the night is great with child of death : no stars
above
Show them hope in heaven, no lights from shore-
ward help on earth.
Is there help or hope to seaward, is there help in
love,
Hope in pity, where the ravening hounds of storm
make mirth?
Where the light but shows the naked eyeless face of
Death
Nearer, laughing dumb and grim across the loud
live storm?
Not in human heart or hand or speech of human
breath,

Surely, nor in saviours found of mortal face or
form.
Yet below the light, between the reefs, a skiff shot
out
Seems a sea-bird fain to breast and brave the strait
fierce pass
Whence the channelled roar of waters driven in
raging rout,
Pent and pressed and maddened, speaks their mon-
strous might and mass.
Thunder heaves and howls about them, lightning
leaps and flashes,
Hard at hand, not high in heaven, but close
between the walls
Heaped and hollowed of the storms of old, whence
reels and crashes
All the rage of all the unbaffled wave that breaks
and falls.
Who shall thwart the madness and the gladness of
it, laden
Full with heavy fate, and joyous as the birds that
whirl?
Nought in heaven or earth, if not one mortal-moulded
maiden,
Nought if not the soul that glorifies a northland
girl.
Not the rocks that break may baffle, not the reefs that
thwart
Stay the ravenous rapture of the waves that crowd
and leap;
Scarce their flashing laughter shows the hunger of
their heart,
Scarce their lion-throated roar the wrath at heart
they keep.

Child and man and woman in the grasp of death
clenched fast
Tremble, clothed with darkness round about, and
scarce draw breath,
Scarce lift eyes up toward the light that saves not,
scarce may cast
Thought or prayer up, caught and trammelled in
the snare of death.
Not as sea-mews cling and laugh or sun their plumes
and sleep
Cling and cower the wild night's waifs of shipwreck,
blind with fear,
Where the fierce reef scarce yields foothold that a bird
might keep,
And the clamorous darkness deadens eye and
deafens ear.
Yet beyond their helpless hearing, out of hopeless
sight,
Saviours, armed and girt upon with strength of
heart, fare forth,
Sire and daughter, hand on oar and face against the
night,
Maid and man whose names are beacons ever to
the North.
Nearer now ; but all the madness of the storming
surf
Hounds and roars them back; but roars and hounds
them back in vain:
As a pleasure-skiff may graze the lake-embanking
turf,
So the boat that bears them grates the rock where-
toward they strain.
Dawn as fierce and haggard as the face of night
scarce guides

Ah, but woe for one, the mother clasping fast her
dead!

Happier, had the surges slain her with her children
slain.

Back they bear, and bring between them safe the
woeful nine,

Where above the ravenous Hawkers fixed at watch
for prey

Storm and calm behold the Longstone's towering
signal shine

Now as when that labouring night brought forth a
shuddering day.

Now as then, though like the hounds of storm against
her snarling

All the clamorous years between us storm down
many a fame,

As our sires beheld before us we behold Grace
Darling

Crowned and throned our queen, and as they hailed
we hail her name.

Nay, not ours alone, her kinsfolk born, though
chiefiest ours,

East and west and south acclaim her queen of
England's maids,

Star more sweet than all their stars and flower than
all their flowers,

Higher in heaven and earth than star than sets or
flower that fades.

How should land or sea that nurtured her forget, or
^{love}

Hold not fast her fame for us while aught is borne
in mind?

Land and sea beneath us, sun and moon and stars
above,

Bear the bright soul witness, seen of all but souls
born blind.
Stars and moon and sun may wax and wane, subside
and rise,
Age on age as flake on flake of showering snows be
shed:
Not till earth be sunless, not till death strike blind
the skies,
May the deathless love that waits on deathless
deeds be dead.

Years on years have withered since beside the hearth
once thine
I, too young to have seen thee, touched thy father's
hallowed hand:
Thee and him shall all men see for ever, stars that
shine
While the sea that spared thee girds and glorifies
the land.

ETON : AN ODE

FOR THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF
THE COLLEGE

I

FOUR hundred summers and fifty have shone on
the meadows of Thames and died
Since Eton arose in an age that was darkness, and
shone by his radiant side
As a star that the spell of a wise man's word bade
live and ascend and abide.

And ever as time's flow brightened, a river more dark
than the storm-clothed sea,
And age upon age rose fairer and larger in promise of
hope set free,
With England Eton her child kept pace as a fostress
of men to be.

And ever as earth waxed wiser, and softer the beating
of time's wide wings,
Since fate fell dark on her father, most hapless and
gentlest of star-crossed kings,
Her praise has increased as the chant of the dawn
that the choir of the noon outsings.

II

Storm and cloud in the skies were loud, and lightning mocked at the blind sun's light;
War and woe on the land below shed heavier shadow than falls from night;
Dark was earth at her dawn of birth as here her record of praise is bright.

Clear and fair through her morning air the light first laugh of the sunlit stage
Rose and rang as a fount that sprang from depths yet dark with a spent storm's rage,
Loud and glad as a boy's, and bade the sunrise open on Shakespeare's age.

Lords of state and of war, whom fate found strong in battle, in counsel strong,
Here, ere fate had approved them great, abode their season, and thought not long:
Here too first was the lark's note nursed that filled and flooded the skies with song.

三

Shelley, lyric lord of England's lordliest singers, here
first heard
Ring from lips of poets crowned and dead the Pro-
methean word
Whence his soul took fire, and power to outsoar the
sunward-soaring bird.

Still the reaches of the river, still the light on field
and hill,
Still the memories held aloft as lamps for hope's
young fire to fill,
Shine, and while the light of England lives shall
shine for England still.

ADIEUX À MARIE STUART

I

QUEEN, for whose house my fathers fought,
With hopes that rose and fell,
Red star of boyhood's fiery thought,
Farewell.

They gave their lives, and I, my queen,
Have given you of my life,
Seeing your brave star burn high between
Men's strife.

The strife that lightened round their spears
Long since fell still: so long
Hardly may hope to last in years
My song.

But still through strife of time and thought
Your light on me too fell:
Queen, in whose name we sang or fought,
Farewell.

II

There beats no heart on either border
Wherethrough the north blasts blow
But keeps your memory as a warder
His beacon-fire aglow.

Long since it fired with love and wonder
Mine, for whose April age
Blithe midsummer made banquet under
The shade of Hermitage.

Soft sang the burn's blithe notes, that gather
Strength to ring true:
And air and trees and sun and heather
Remembered you.

Old border ghosts of fight or fairy
Or love or teen,
These they forgot, remembering Mary
The Queen.

III

Queen once of Scots and ever of ours
Whose sires brought forth for you
Their lives to strew your way like flowers,
Adieu.

Dead is full many a dead man's name
Who died for you this long
Time past: shall this too fare the same,
My song ?

But surely, though it die or live,
Your face was worth
All that a man may think to give
On earth.

No darkness cast of years between
Can darken you:
Man's love will never bid my queen
Adieu.

IV

Love hangs like light about your name
As music round the shell:
No heart can take of you a tame
Farewell.

Yet, when your very face was seen,
Ill gifts were yours for giving:
Love gat strange guerdons of my queen
When living.

O diamond heart unflawed and clear,
The whole world's crowning jewel!
Was ever heart so deadly dear
So cruel?

Yet none for you of all that bled
Grudged once one drop that fell.
Not one to life reluctant said
Farewell.

V

Strange love they have given you, love disloyal,
Who mock with praise your name,
To leave a head so rare and royal
Too low for praise or blame.

You could not love nor hate, they tell us,
You had nor sense nor sting:
In God's name, then, what plague befell us
To fight for such a thing?

" Some faults the gods will give," to fetter
Man's highest intent:
But surely you were something better
Than innocent!

No maid that strays with steps unwary
Through snares unseen,
But one to live and die for; Mary,
The Queen.

VI

Forgive them all their praise, who blot
Your fame with praise of you:
Then love may say, and falter not,
Adieu.

Yet some you hardly would forgive
Who did you much less wrong
Once: but resentment should not live
Too long.

They never saw your lip's bright bow,
Your swordbright eyes,
The bluest of heavenly things below
The skies.

Clear eyes that love's self finds most like
A swordblade's blue,
A swordblade's ever keen to strike,
Adieu.

VII

Though all things breathe or sound of fight
That yet make up your spell,
To bid you were to bid the light
Farewell.

Farewell the song says only, being
A star whose race is run:
Farewell the soul says never, seeing
The sun.

Yet, wellnigh as with flash of tears,
The song must say but so
That took your praise up twenty years
Ago.

More bright than stars or moons that vary,
Sun kindling heaven and hell,
Here, after all these years, Queen Mary,
Farewell.

THE WAY OF THE WIND

THE wind's way in the deep sky's hollow
None may measure, as none can say
How the heart in her shows the swallow
The wind's way.

Hope nor fear can avail to stay
Waves that whiten on wrecks that wallow,
Times and seasons that wane and slay.

Life and love, till the strong night swallow
Thought and hope and the red last ray,
Swim the waters of years that follow
The wind's way.

A BABY'S DEATH

I

A LITTLE soul scarce fledged for earth
Takes wing with heaven again for goal
Even while we hailed as fresh from birth
A little soul.

Our thoughts ring sad as bells that toll,
Not knowing beyond this blind world's girth
What things are writ in heaven's full scroll.

Our fruitfulness is there but dearth,
And all things held in time's control
Seem there, perchance, ill dreams, not worth
A little soul.

II

The little feet that never trod
Earth, never strayed in field or street,
What hand leads upward back to God
The little feet?

A rose in June's most honied heat,
When life makes keen the kindling sod,
Was not so soft and warm and sweet.

Their pilgrimage's period
A few swift moons have seen complete
Since mother's hands first clasped and shod
The little feet.

III

The little hands that never sought
Earth's prizes, worthless all as sands,
What gift has death, God's servant, brought
 The little hands?

We ask: but love's self silent stands,
Love, that lends eyes and wings to thought
To search where death's dim heaven expands.

Ere this, perchance, though love know nought,
Flowers fill them, grown in lovelier lands,
Where hands of guiding angels caught
 The little hands.

IV

The little eyes that never knew
Light other than of dawning skies,
What new life now lights up anew
The little eyes?

Who knows but on their sleep may rise
Such light as never heaven let through
To lighten earth from Paradise?

No storm, we know, may change the blue
Soft heaven that haply death descries;
No tears, like these in ours, bedew
The little eyes.

A BABY'S DEATH**V**

Was life so strange, so sad the sky,
So strait the wide world's range,
He would not stay to wonder why
Was life so strange ?

Was earth's fair house a joyless grange
Beside that house on high
Whence Time that bore him failed to estrange ?

That here at once his soul put by
All gifts of time and change,
And left us heavier hearts to sigh
“ Was life so strange ? ”

VI

Angel by name love called him, seeing so fair
The sweet small frame;
Meet to be called, if ever man's child were,
Angel by name.

Rose-bright and warm from heaven's own heart he
And might not bear [came,
The cloud that covers earth's wan face with shame.

His little light of life was all too rare
And soft a flame :
Heaven yearned for him till angels hailed him there
Angel by name.

VII

The song that smiled upon his birthday here
Weeps on the grave that holds him undefiled
Whose loss makes bitterer than a soundless tear
 The song that smiled.

His name crowned once the mightiest ever styled
Sovereign of arts, and angel: fate and fear
Knew then their master, and were reconciled.

But we saw born beneath some tenderer sphere
Michael, an angel and a little child,
Whose loss bows down to weep upon his bier
 The song that smiled.

BENEDICTION

BLEST in death and life beyond man's guessing
Little children live and die, possest
Still of grace that keeps them past expressing
Blest.

Each least chirp that rings from every nest,
Each least touch of flower-soft fingers pressing
Aught that yearns and trembles to be prest,

Each least glance, gives gift of grace, redressing
Grief's worst wrongs: each mother's nurturing breast
Feeds a flower of bliss, beyond all blessing
Blest.

ÉTUDE RÉALISTE

I

A BABY'S feet, like sea-shells pink,
Might tempt, should heaven see meet,
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,
A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat
They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
Gleam half so heavenly sweet
As shine on life's untrodden brink
A baby's feet.

II

A baby's hands, like rosebuds furled
Whence yet no leaf expands,
Ope if you touch, though close upcurled,
A baby's hands.

Then, fast as warriors grip their brands
When battle's bolt is hurled,
They close, clenched hard like tightening bands.

No rosebuds yet by dawn impearled
Match, even in loveliest lands,
The sweetest flowers in all the world—
A baby's hands.

III

A baby's eyes, ere speech begin,
Ere lips learn words or sighs,
Bless all things bright enough to win
A baby's eyes.

Love, while the sweet thing laughs and lies,
And sleep flows out and in,
Sees perfect in them Paradise.

Their glance might cast out pain and sin,
Their speech make dumb the wise,
By mute glad godhead felt within
A baby's eyes.

BABYHOOD

I

A BABY shines as bright
If winter or if May be
On eyes that keep in sight
A baby.

Though dark the skies or grey be,
It fills our eyes with light,
If midnight or midday be.

Love hails it, day and night,
The sweetest thing that may be,
Yet cannot praise aright
A baby.

II

All heaven, in every baby born,
All absolute of earthly leaven,
Reveals itself, though man may scorn
 All heaven.

Yet man might feel all sin forgiven,
All grief appeased, all pain outworn,
By this one revelation given.

Soul, now forget thy burdens borne:
Heart, be thy joys now seven times seven:
Love shows in light more bright than morn
 All heaven.

III

What likeness may define, and stray not
From truth's exactest way,
A baby's beauty? Love can say not
What likeness may.

The Mayflower loveliest held in May
Of all that shine and stay not
Laughs not in rosier disarray.

Sleek satin, swansdown, buds that play not
As yet with winds that play,
Would fain be matched with this, and may not:
What likeness may?

IV

Rose, round whose bed
Dawn's cloudlets close,
Earth's brightest-bred
Rose !

No song, love knows,
May praise the head
Your curtain shows.

Ere sleep has fled,
The whole child glows
One sweet live red
Rose.

BEFORE SUNSET

LOVE'S twilight wanes in heaven above,
On earth ere twilight reigns:
Ere fear may feel the chill thereof,
Love's twilight wanes.

Ere yet the insatiate heart complains
"Too much, and scarce enough,"
The lip so late athirst refrains.

Soft on the neck of either dove
Love's hands let slip the reins :
And while we look for light of love
Love's twilight wanes.

CHILD'S SONG

WHAT is gold worth, say,
Worth for work or play,
Worth to keep or pay,
Hide or throw away,
Hope about or fear ?
What is love worth, pray ?
Worth a tear ?

Golden on the mould
Lie the dead leaves rolled
Of the wet woods old,
Yellow leaves and cold,
Woods without a dove;
Gold is worth but gold;
Love's worth love.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

NEW YEAR, be good to England. Bid her name
Shine sunlike as of old on all the sea:
Make strong her soul: set all her spirit free:
Bind fast her homeborn foes with links of shame
More strong than iron and more keen than flame:
Seal up their lips for shame's sake: so shall she
Who was the light that lightened freedom be,
For all false tongues, in all men's eyes the same.

O last-born child of Time, earth's eldest lord,
God undiscrowned of godhead, who for man
Begets all good and evil things that live,
Do thou, his new-begotten son, implored
Of hearts that hope and fear not, make thy span
Bright with such light as history bids thee give.

EAST TO WEST

SUNSET smiles on sunrise: east and west are one,
Face to face in heaven before the sovereign sun.
From the springs of the dawn everlasting a glory
 renews and transfigures the west,
From the depths of the sunset a light as of morning
 enkindles the broad sea's breast,
And the lands and the skies and the waters are glad
 of the day's and the night's work done.

Child of dawn, and regent on the world-wide sea,
England smiles on Europe, fair as dawn and free.
Not the waters that gird her are purer, nor mightier
 the winds that her waters know.
But America, daughter and sister of England, is
 praised of them, far as they flow:
Atlantic responds to Pacific the praise of her days
 that have been and shall be.

So from England westward let the watchword fly,
So for England eastward let the seas reply;
Praise, honour, and love everlasting be sent on the
 wind's wings, westward and east,
That the pride of the past and the pride of the future
 may mingle as friends at feast,
And the sons of the lords of the world-wide seas be
 one till the world's life die.

A CHILD'S LAUGHTER

ALL the bells of heaven may ring,
All the birds of heaven may sing,
All the wells on earth may spring,
All the winds on earth may bring
 All sweet sounds together;
Sweeter far than all things heard,
Hand of harper, tone of bird,
Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,
Welling water's winsome word,
 Wind in warm wan weather,

One thing yet there is, that none
Hearing ere its chime be done
Knows not well the sweetest one
Heard of man beneath the sun,
 Hoped in heaven hereafter;
Soft and strong and loud and light,
Very sound of very light
Heard from morning's rosiest height
When the soul of all delight
 Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled
Never forth such notes, nor told
Hours so blithe in tones so bold,
As the radiant mouth of gold
 Here that rings forth heaven.
If the golden-crested wren
Were a nightingale—why, then,
Something seen and heard of men
Might be half as sweet as when
 Laughs a child of seven.

A CHILD'S FUTURE

WHAT will it please you, my darling, hereafter
to be?
Fame upon land will you look for, or glory by sea?
Gallant your life will be always, and all of it free.

Free as the wind when the heart of the twilight is
stirred
Eastward, and sounds from the springs of the sunrise
are heard:
Free—and we know not another as infinite word.

Darkness or twilight or sunlight may compass us round,
Hate may arise up against us, or hope may confound;
Love may forsake us; yet may not the spirit be bound.

Free in oppression of grief as in ardour of joy
Still may the soul be, and each to her strength as a toy:
Free in the glance of the man as the smile of the boy.

Freedom alone is the salt and the spirit that gives
Life, and without her is nothing that verily lives:
Death cannot slay her: she laughs upon death and
forgives.

Brightest and hardiest of roses anear and afar
Glitters the blithe little face of you, round as a star:
Liberty bless you and keep you to be as you are.

England and liberty bless you and keep you to be
Worthy the name of their child and the sight of their sea:
Fear not at all; for a slave, if he fears not, is free.

WHAT IS DEATH?

LOOKING on a page where stood
Graven of old on old-world wood
Death, and by the grave's edge grim,
Pale, the young man facing him,
Asked my well-beloved of me
Once what strange thing this might be,
Gaunt and great of limb.

Death, I told him: and, surprise
Deepening more his wildwood eyes
(Like some sweet fleet thing's whose breath
Speaks all spring though nought it saith),
Up he turned his rosebright face
Glorious with its seven years' grace,
Asking—What is death ?

THE TYNESIDE WIDOW

THERE'S mony a man loves land and life,
Loves life and land and fee;
And mony a man loves fair women,
But never a man loves me, my love,
But never a man loves me.

O weel and weel for a' lovers,
I wot weel may they be;
And weel and weel for a' fair maidens,
But aye mair woe for me, my love,
But aye mair woe for me.

O weel be wi' you, ye sma' flowers,
Ye flowers and every tree;
And weel be wi' you, a' birdies,
But teen and tears wi' me, my love,
But teen and tears wi' me.

O weel be yours, my three brethren,
And ever weel be ye;
Wi' deeds for doing and loves for wooing,
But never a love for me, my love,
But never a love for me.

And weel be yours, my seven sisters,
And good love-days to see,
And long life-days and true lovers,
But never a day for me, my love,
But never a day for me.

Good times wi' you, ye bauld riders,
By the hieland and the lee;
And by the leeland and by the hieland
It's weary times wi' me, my love,
It's weary times wi' me.

Good days wi' you, ye good sailors,
Sail in and out the sea;
And by the beaches and by the reaches
It's heavy days wi' me, my love,
It's heavy days wi' me.

I had his kiss upon my mouth,
His bairn upon my knee;
I would my soul and body were twain,
And the bairn and the kiss wi' me, my love,
And the bairn and the kiss wi' me.

The bairn down in the mools, my dear,
O saft and saft lies she;
I would the mools were ower my head,
And the young bairn fast wi' me, my love,
And the young bairn fast wi' me.

The father under the faem, my dear,
O sound and sound sleeps he;
I would the faem were ower my face,
And the father lay by me, my love,
And the father lay by me.

I would the faem were ower my face,
Or the mools on my ee-bree;
And waking-time with a' lovers,
But sleeping-time wi' me, my love,
But sleeping-time wi' me.

THE TYNESIDE WIDOW

I would the mools were meat in my mouth,
The saut faem in my ee;
And the land-worm and the water-worm
To feed fu' sweet on me, my love,
To feed fu' sweet on me.

My life is sealed with a seal of love,
And locked with love for a key;
And I lie wrang and I wake lang,
But ye tak' nae thought for me, my love,
But ye tak' nae thought for me.

We were weel fain of love, my dear,
O fain and fain were we;
It was weel with a' the weary world,
But O, sae weel wi' me, my love,
But O, sae weel wi' me.

We were nane ower mony to sleep, my dear,
I wot we were but three;
And never a bed in the weary world
For my bairn and my dear and me, my love,
For my bairn and my dear and me.

LORD SOULIS

L ORD SOULIS is a keen wizard,
A wizard mickle of lear:
Who cometh in bond of Lord Soulis,
Thereof he hath little cheer.

He has three braw castles to his hand,
That wizard mickle of age;
The first of Estness, the last of Westness,
The middle of Hermitage.

He has three fair mays into his hand,
The least is good to see;
The first is Annet, the second is Janet,
The third is Marjorie.

The firsten o' them has a gowden crown,
The neist has a gowden ring;
The third has sma' gowd her about,
She has a sweeter thing.

The firsten o' them has a rose her on,
The neist has a marigold;
The third of them has a better flower,
The best that springeth ower wold.

The kisses that are her mouth within,
There is no man knoweth of any one;
She is a pure maid of her body,
The best that standeth under sun.

And Estness was a bonny castle,
 It stood upon a sea;
 The green for Annet, the yellow for Janet,
 The brown for Marjorie.

And Westness was a bonny castle,
 It lay upon a lea;
 Red wine for Annet, and white for Janet,
 And water for Marjorie.

But Hermitage is a fair castle,
 The fairest of the three;
 Saft beds for Annet, silk sheets for Janet,
 Nane sheets for Marjorie.

He made them a' by strong cunning,
 That wizard great of hand;
 The twain to fall at his life's ending,
 The third alway to stand.

He made them a' by hell's cunning,
 That wizard full of ill;
 They burnt up Estness and cast down Westness,
 But Hermitage standeth still.

There be twenty lords in that border,
 Full twenty strong lords and three,
 They have sworn an oath for Lord Soulis,
 Weel wroken of him to be.

They have set a meeting at Emmethaugh,
 And upon the Lilienshaw,
 They will be wroken of Lord Soulis,
 His body to hang and draw.

They have broken bread between them a'
 At Ottershawe that's ower the lea,
 They wad plunder Estness and harry Westness,
 But Hermitage they let be.

They watered steeds by the wan Wellhaugh
 Under the sweet leaves green;
 Frae the Yethburn head to Christenbury,
 To ride they were full keen.

When they were come to the Yethburn spait,
 I wot their knees were wet;
 When they were come to the Yethburn head,
 There was no porter at tha yett.

When they had won to the Bloody-bush,
 I wot their sides were sair:
 Before they were well upon that border
 They had mickle sorrow and care.
 "O gin we were at the sweet Wellhaugh,
 Under the merry leaves fair!"

Before they were well on the other side
 He set a sair cast them between—
 "O gin we were by the Emmetburn
 Under the little leaves green,
 Between the birks and the Emmet water,
 We had the better been."

When they came on that weary border,
 He sent an ill thing them amang;
 "We winna ride ower to Hermitage,
 The wa's they are too strang;
 But we will ride to the low castles,
 Though the ways be ill to gang."

Out then spak Burd Marjorie's lover,
 He was a fair man of his face;
 " Gin I may be wroken of Lord Soulis
 I have sma' care of my place;

" Gin I may be wroken of Lord Soulis
 I have sma' care of ony thing;
 Of the wine for shedding, the sheets for wedding,
 The kirk for christening.

" I have sma' care of my sad body
 Upon the ground to gang;
 Gin I wist where I might be wroken of him
 I wad give it to him strang."

Out then spak may Janet's brother,
 He was a stout knight and a keen;
 " He has sent his devils us amang
 To work us trouble and teen.

" Gin I wist where I might be wroken of him,
 Betwixen dark and day,
 I wad give baith my soul and body
 To hell to fetch away."

Out then spak Burd Annet's father,
 He was a good man full of age;
 " Ye'll speir at Estness, ye'll speir at Westness,
 But no at Hermitage."

They turned their horse-heads round about,
 Rode low down by the sand;
 And a' the way they went upon,
 The devil went at their hand.

The first castle they came to,
It stood upon a sea;
The least worth chamber in a' that castle,
It was a' whalestooth and sandal-tree.

"O whatten a may is yonder may,
Sae fair to see upon?"

"O yonder is my daughter Annet,
Out of my ha's was gone."

"Gin ye'll come hither to me, Annet,
God's grace of me ye'se have."

"I wadna gang out, my auld fool father,
Gin ye were graithed in your grave."

"Give me three kisses, my daughter Annet,
Before my mouth is cold."

"I winna come forth for nae man's grey beard,
Till my bairn be a sennight old."

He turned his face against the sea,
His heart brak right awain;

"The fire of hell for your body, Annet,
Ere ye behold me again."

"Pull off the green, and the goodly green,
Put on the black, the black,

For my father is ridden to Wearyland,
I doubt he'll never win back."

They turned their horse-heads round about,
Rode high upon a hill;
And a' the gate they gaed about,
The devil them garred gang ill.

The neister castle they came to,
 It was hard upon the low champaign;
 The least worth bower in a' that castle,
 It was a' white siller and green stane.

" O whatten a may is yonder may
 That is sae great of her body ? "
 " O yonder is my sister Janet,
 Was stolen by night frae me.

" Gin ye'll come hither to me, Janet,
 God's love of me ye'se hae."
 " I wadna gang out for aye, brither,
 Though ye were dead the day."

" O ye'll gang down to me, Janet,
 For God's sweet mercy and mine;
 For I have sought ye the lang lands ower,
 These eight months wearing nine."

" I winna gang forth for nae brither,
 Though his body should be lorn;
 I winna gang forth for nae man's face,
 Till Lord Soulis' bairn be born."

He turned his face against the brigg,
 His heart brak right in three;
 " The sorrow of hell for you, Janet,
 And the warld's sorrow for me."

" Take down the red, and the bonny red,
 Set up the black, the black:
 For my brother is ridden to Wearieswood,
 I wot he'll never win back."

They turned their horse-heads round about,
Rode back a day and twain:
And a' the rivers they rode upon
The devil rode at their rein.

The third castle they came to,
It was the castle of Hermitage;
There is nae man may break the sides of it,
Though the stanes therein are great of age.

"O whatten a may is yonder may,
That looks like ony flower ?"
"O yon is my very love, Marjorie,
Was borne out of my bower."

The bower Lady Marjorie was in,
It had neither white cloths nor red,
There were nae rushes to the bower floors,
And nae pillows to the bed.

"O will ye come down but a very little,
For God's sake or for me ?
Or will ye kiss me a very little,
But six poor kisses and three ?"

She's leaned hersell to that window,
For sorrow she couldna stand;
She's bound her body by that window,
With iron at her hand.

She's sworn by tree and by tree's leaf,
By aits and rye and corn,
"Gin ye hadna come the night," she says,
"I had been but dead the morn."

She's kissed him under the bower-bar
 Nine goodly times and ten;
 And forth is come that keen wizard
 In the middest of his men.

And forth is come that foul wizard,
 God give him a curse and care!
 Says "the life is one time sweet to have
 And the death is three times sair."

Forth is come that strong wizard,
 God give him a heavy day!
 Says "ye shall have joy of your leman's body
 When April cometh after May."

Between the hill and the wan water
 In fields that were full sweet,
 There was riding and running together,
 And many a man gat red-shod feet.

Between the wa's and the Hermitage water,
 In ways that were waxen red
 There was cleaving of caps and shearing of jack,
 And many a good man was there dead.

ey have taken that strong wizard
 'n bind him by the hands:
 nks of airn brast off his body
 splints of bursten birken wands.

v have taken that keen wizard
 'n him by the hause-bane;
 The l... airn brast off his body
 As blossom that is burst wi' rain.

And they have taken that foul wizard
 To bind him by the feet:
 The links of airn brast off his body
 As berries that are burst with heat.

They have putten fire upon his flesh,
 For nae fire wad it shrink:
 They have casten his body in the wan well-head,
 For nae water wad it sink.

Jp then gat the fiend Borolallie,
 Bade them " Give ower and let me:
 Between warld's fire and warld's water
 He gat a gift of me;
 Till fire come out of wan water,
 There's name shall gar him dee."

" A rede, a rede, thou foul Borolallie,
 A good rede out of hand;
 Shall we be wroken of Lord Soulis
 By water or by land?
 Or shall we be wroken a great way off,
 Or even whereas we stand ? "

And up it spak him, foul Borolallie,
 Between the tree and the leaf o' the tree;
 " Ye maunna be wroken of Lord Soulis
 By land neither by sea;
 Between red fire and wan water
 Weel wroken ye shall be."

And up it spak him, foul Borolallie,
 Between Lord Soulis and them a':
 " Ye maunna be wroken of Lord Soulis
 Betwixen house and ha';
 But ye maun take him to the Ninestane rigs
 And take his life awa'."

They have taken him to the Ninestane rigs
 His foul body to slay;
 Between the whins and the whinstanes
 He had a weary way.

They have taken him to the Ninestane rigs
 His foul body to spill:
 Between the green broom and the yellow
 He gat a bitter ill.

They had a sair cast with his foul body,
 There was nae man wist what to do;
 "And O gin his body were weel sodden,
 Weel sodden and suppit in broo!"

And out it spak him, foul Borolallie,
 Says "whatten a coil's this coil?
 Ye'll mak a fire on the Ninestane rigs,
 For a pot thereon to boil."

And out it spak him, foul Borolallie,
 Says "whatten a din's this din?
 Ye'll boil his body within the brass,
 The brass to boil him in."

They boiled his body on the Ninestane rigs
 That wizard mickle of lear;
 They have sodden the bones of his body,
 To be their better cheer.

They buried his bones on the Ninestane rigs
 But the flesh was a' clean gane;
 There was great joy in a' that border
 That Lord Soulis was well slain.

THE SUNDEW

A LITTLE marsh-plant, yellow-green,
And pricked at lip with tender red.
Tread close, and either way you tread
Some faint black water jets between
Lest you should bruise the curious head.

A live thing maybe; who shall know ?
The summer knows and suffers it;
For the cool moss is thick and sweet
Each side, and saves the blossom so
That it lives out the long June heat.

The deep scent of the heather burns
About it; breathless though it be,
Bow down and worship; more than we
Is the least flower whose life returns,
Least weed renascent in the sea.

We are vexed and cumbered in earth's sight
With wants, with many memories;
These see their mother what she is,
Glad-growing, till August leave more bright
The apple-coloured cranberries.

Wind blows and bleaches the strong grass,
Blown all one way to shelter it
From trample of strayed kine, with feet
Felt heavier than the moorhen was,
Strayed up past patches of wild wheat.

THE SUNDEW

You call it sundew: how it grows,
If with its colour it have breath,
If life taste sweet to it, if death
Pain its soft petal, no man knows:
Man has no sight or sense that saith.

My sundew, grown of gentle days,
In these green miles the spring begun
Thy growth ere April had half done
With the soft secret of her ways
Or June made ready for the sun.

O red-lipped mouth of marsh-flower,
I have a secret halved with thee.
The name that is love's name to me
Thou knowest, and the face of her
Who is my festival to see.

The hard sun, as thy petals knew,
Coloured the heavy moss-water:
Thou wert not worth green midsummer
Nor fit to live to August blue,
O sundew, not remembering her.

ON A COUNTRY ROAD

A LONG these low pleached lanes, on such a day,
So soft a day as this, through shade and sun,
With glad grave eyes that scanned the glad wild way,
And heart still hovering o'er a song begun,
And smile that warmed the world with benison,
Our father, lord long since of lordly rhyme,
Long since hath haply ridden, when the lime
Bloomed broad above him, flowering where he came.
Because thy passage once made warm this clime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each year that England clothes herself with May,
She takes thy likeness on her. Time hath spun
Fresh raiment all in vain and strange array
For earth and man's new spirit, fain to shun
Things past for dreams of better to be won,
Through many a century since thy funeral chime
Rang, and men deemed it death's most direful crime
To have spared not thee for very love or shame;
And yet, while mists round last year's memories climb,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each turn of the old wild road whereon we stray,
Meseems, might bring us face to face with one
Whom seeing we could not but give thanks, and pray
For England's love our father and her son
To speak with us as once in days long done
With all men, sage and churl and monk and mime,
Who knew not as we know the soul sublime
That sang for song's love more than lust of fame.
Yet, though this be not, yet, in happy time,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Friend, even as bees about the flowering thyme,
Years crowd on years, till hoar decay begrime
Names once beloved; but, seeing the sun the same,
As birds of autumn fain to praise the prime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

LOCH TORRIDON

TO E. H.

THE dawn of night more fair than morning rose,
Stars hurrying forth on stars, as snows on snows
Haste when the wind and winter bid them speed.
Vague miles of moorland road behind us lay
Scarce traversed ere the day
Sank, and the sun forsook us at our need,
Belated. Where we thought to have rested, rest
Was none; for soft Maree's dim quivering breast,
Bound round with gracious inland girth of green
And fearless of the wild wave-wandering West,
Shone shelterless for strangers; and unseen
The goal before us lay
Of all our blithe and strange and strenuous day.

For when the northering road faced westward—when
The dark sharp sudden gorge dropped seaward—then,
Beneath the stars, between the steeps, the track
We followed, lighted not of moon or sun,
And plunging whither none
Might guess, while heaven and earth were hoar and
black,
Seemed even the dim still pass whence none turns
back:
And through the twilight leftward of the way,
And down the dark, with many a laugh and leap,
The light blithe hill-streams shone from scaur to steep

In glittering pride of play;
And ever while the night grew great and deep
We felt but saw not what the hills would keep
Sacred awhile from sense of moon or star;
And full and far
Beneath us, sweet and strange as heaven may be,
The sea.

The very sea: no mountain-moulded lake
Whose fluctuant shapeliness is fain to take
Shape from the steadfast shore that rules it round,
And only from the storms a casual sound:
The sea, that harbours in her heart sublime
The supreme heart of music deep as time,
And in her spirit strong
The spirit of all imaginable song.

We saw not, we heard not, the face or the voice of
the waters: we knew
By the darkling delight of the wind as the sense of
the sea in it grew,
By the pulse of the darkness about us enkindled and
quickened, that here,
Unseen and unheard of us, surely the goal we had
faith in was near.
A silence diviner than music, a darkness diviner than
light,
Fulfilled as from heaven with a measureless comfort
the measure of night.

But never a roof for shelter
And never a sign for guide
Rose doubtful or visible: only
And hardly and gladly we heard
The soft waves whisper and welter,
Subdued, and allured to subside,
By the mild night's magic: the lonely
Sweet silence was soothed, not stirred,
By the noiseless noise of the gleaming
Glad ripples, that played and sighed,
Kissed, laughed, recoiled, and relented,
Whispered, flickered, and fled.
No season was this for dreaming
How oft, with a stormier tide,
Had the wrath of the winds been vented
On sons of the tribes long dead:
The tribes whom time, and the changes
Of things, and the stress of doom,
Have erased and effaced; forgotten
As wrecks or weeds of the shore

In sight of the stern hill-ranges
That hardly may change their gloom
When the fruits of the years wax rotten
And the seed of them springs no more.
For the dim strait footway dividing
The waters that breathed below
Led safe to the kindest of shelters
That ever awoke into light:
And still in remembrance abiding
Broods over the stars that glow
And the water that eddies and welters
The passionate peace of the night.

All night long, in the world of sleep,
Skies and waters were soft and deep:
Shadow clothed them, and silence made
Soundless music of dream and shade:
All above us, the livelong night,
Shadow, kindled with sense of light;
All around us, the brief night long,
Silence, laden with sense of song.
Stars and mountains without, we knew,
Watched and waited, the soft night through:
All unseen, but divined and dear,
Thrilled the touch of the sea's breath near:
All unheard, but alive like sound,
Throbbed the sense of the sea's life round:
Round us, near us, in depth and height,
Soft as darkness and keen as light.

And a day was arisen indeed for us. Years and the
changes of years
Clothed round with their joys and their sorrows, and
dead as their hopes and their fears,
Lie noteless and nameless, unlit by remembrance or
record of days
Worth wonder or memory, or cursing or blessing, or
passion or praise,
Between us who live and forget not, but yearn with
delight in it yet,
And the day we forget not, and never may live and
may think to forget.
And the years that were kindlier and fairer, and
kindled with pleasures as keen,
Have eclipsed not with lights or with shadows the
light on the face of it seen.
For softly and surely, as nearer the boat that we
gazed from drew,
The face of the precipice opened and bade us as birds
pass through,
And the bark shot sheer to the sea through the strait
of the sharp steep cleft,
The portal that opens with imminent rampires to
right and to left,
Sublime as the sky they darken and strange as a
spell-struck dream,
On the world unconfined of the mountains, the reign
of the sea supreme,
The kingdom of westward waters, wherein when we
swam we knew
The waves that we clove were boundless, the wind
on our brows that blew
Had swept no land and no lake, and had warred not
on tower or on tree,
But came on us hard out of heaven, and alive with
the soul of the sea.

EVENING ON THE BROADS

OVER two shadowless waters, adrift as a pinnace
in peril,
Hangs as in heavy suspense, charged with irresolute
light,
Softly the soul of the sunset upholden awhile on the
sterile
Waves and wastes of the land, half repossessed by
the night.
Inland glimmer the shallows asleep and afar in the
breathless
Twilight : yonder the depths darken afar and
asleep.
Slowly the semblance of death out of heaven descends
on the deathless
Waters : hardly the light lives on the face of the
deep—
Hardly, but here for awhile. All over the grey soft
shallow
Hover the colours and clouds of the twilight, void
of a star.
As a bird unfledged is the broad-winged night, whose
winglets are callow
Yet, but soon with their plumes will she cover her
brood from afar,
Cover the brood of her worlds that cumber the skies
with their blossom
Thick as the darkness of leaf-shadowed spring is
encumbered with flowers.

World upon world is enwound in the bountiful girth
of her bosom,

Warm and lustrous with life lovely to look on as ours,
Still is the sunset adrift as a spirit in doubt that dis-
sem样子

Still with itself, being sick of division and dimmed
by dismay—

Nay, not so ; but with love and delight beyond
passion it trembles,

Fearful and faint of the night, lovely with love of
the day:

Fain and fearful of rest that is like unto death, and
begotten

Out of the womb of the tomb, born of the seed of
the grave:

Lovely with shadows of loves that are only not
wholly forgotten,

Only not wholly suppressed by the dark as a wreck
by the wave.

Still there linger the loves of the morning and noon,
in a vision

Blindly beheld, but in vain: ghosts that are tired,
and would rest.

But the glories beloved of the night rise all too dense
for division,

Deep in the depth of her breast sheltered as doves
in a nest.

Fainter the beams of the loves of the daylight season
enkindled

Wane, and the memories of hours that were fair
with the love of them fade:

Loftier, aloft of the lights of the sunset stricken and
dwindled,

Gather the signs of the love at the heart of the
night new-made.

New-made night, new-born of the sunset, immeasurable, endless,

Opens the secret of love hid from of old in her heart,
In the deep sweet heart full-charged with faultless
love of the friendless

Spirits of men that are eased when the wheels of
the sun depart.

Still is the sunset afloat as a ship on the waters upholding
Full-sailed, wide-winged, poised softly for ever
asaway—

Nay, not so, but at least for a little, awhile at the
golden

Limit of arching air fain for an hour to delay.

Here on the bar of the sand-bank, steep yet aslope
to the gleaming

Waste of the water without, waste of the water
within,

Lights overhead and lights underneath seem doubtfully dreaming

Whether the day be done, whether the night may
begin.

Colder again and slowly remoter, afraid to recover
Breath, yet faint to revive, as it seems, from the
skirt of the shroud.

Faintly the heartbeats shorten and pause of the light
in the westward

Heaven, as eastward quicken the paces of star
upon star

Hurried and eager of life as a child that strains to
the breast-ward

Eagerly, yearning forth of the deeps where the
ways of them are.

Glad of the glory of the gift of their life and the
wealth of its wonder,
Fain of the night and the sea and the sweet wan
face of the earth.
Over them air grows deeper, intense with delight in
them: under
Things are thrilled in their sleep as with sense of
a sure new birth.
But here by the sand-bank watching, with eyes on
the sea-line, stranger
Grows to me also the weight of the sea-ridge
gazed on of me,
Heavily heaped up, changefully changeless, void
though of danger
Void not of menace, but full of the might of the
dense dull sea.
Like as the wave is before me, behind is the bank
deep-drifted;
Yellow and thick as the bank is behind me in front
is the wave.
As the wall of a prison imprisoning the mere is the
girth of it lifted:
But the rampire of water in front is erect as the
wall of a grave.
And the crests of it crumble and topple and change,
but the wall is not broken:
Standing still dry-shod, I see it as higher than my
head,
Moving inland alway again, reared up as in token
Still of impending wrath still in the foam of it shed.
And even in the pauses between them, dividing the
rollers in sunder,
High overhead seems ever the sea-line fixed as a
mark,

And the shore where I stand as a valley behoden of
hills whence thunder
Cloud and torrent and storm, darkening the depths
of the dark.
Up to the sea, not upon it or over it, upward from
under
Seems he to gaze, whose eyes yearn after it here
from the shore:
A wall of turbid water, aslope to the wide sky's
wonder
Of colour and cloud, it climbs, or spreads as a
slanted floor.
And the large lights change on the face of the mere
like things that were living,
Winged and wonderful, beams like as birds are
that pass and are free:
But the light is dense as darkness, a gift withheld in
the giving,
That lies as dead on the fierce dull face of the land-
ward sea.
Stained and stifled and soiled, made earthier than
earth is and duller,
Grimly she puts back light as rejected, a thing put
away:
No transparent rapture, a molten music of colour;
No translucent love taken and given of the day.
Fettered and marred and begrimed is the light's live
self on her falling,
As the light of a man's life lighted the fume of a
dungeon mars:
Only she knows of the wind, when her wrath gives
ear to him calling;
The delight of the light she knows not, nor answers
the sun or the stars.

Love she hath none to return for the luminous love
of their giving:
None to reflect from the bitter and shallow response
of her heart.
Yearly she feeds on her dead, yet herself seems dead
and not living,
Or confused as a soul heavy-laden with trouble
that will not depart.
In the sound of her speech to the darkness the moan
of her evil remorse is,
Haply, for strong ships gnawed by the dog-toothed
sea-bank's fang
And trampled to death by the rage of the feet of her
foam-lipped horses
Whose manes are yellow as plague, and as ensigns
of pestilence hang,
That wave in the foul faint air of the breath of a
death-stricken city;
So menacing heaves she the manes of her rollers
knotted with sand,
Discoloured, opaque, suspended in sign as of strength
without pity,
That shake with flameless thunder the low long
length of the strand.
Here, far off in the farther extreme of the shore as it
lengthens
Northward, lonely for miles, ere ever a village begin,
On the lapsing land that recedes as the growth of
the strong sea strengthens
Shoreward, thrusting further and further its out-
works in,
Here in Shakespeare's vision, a flower of her kin
forsaken,
Lay in her golden raiment alone on the wild wave's
edge,

Surely by no shore else, but here on the bank storm-shaken,
Perdita, bright as a dew-drop engilt of the sun on the sedge.
Here on a shore un beheld of his eyes in a dream he beheld her
Outcast, fair as a fairy, the child of a far-off king:
And over the babe-flower gently the head of a pastoral elder
Bowed, compassionate, hoar as the hawthorn-blossom in spring,
And kind as harvest in autumn: a shelter of shade on the lonely
Shelterless unknown shore scourged of implacable waves:
Here, where the wind walks royal, alone in his kingdom, and only
Sounds to the sedges a wail as of triumph that conquers and craves.
All these waters and wastes are his empire of old, and awaken
From barren and stagnant slumber at only the sound of his breath:
Yet the hunger is eased not that aches in his heart, nor the goal overtaken
That his wide wings yearn for and labour as hearts that yearn after death.
All the solitude sighs and expects with a blind expectation
Somewhat unknown of its own sad heart, grown heartsick of strife:
Till sometime its wild heart maddens, and moans, and the vast ululation
Takes wing with the clouds on the waters, and wails to be quit of its life.

For the spirit and soul of the waste is the wind, and
his wings with their waving
Darken and lighten the darkness and light of it
thickened or thinned;
But the heart that impels them is even as a conqueror's
insatiably craving
That victory can fill not, as power cannot satiate
the want of the wind.
All these moorlands and marshes are full of his might,
and oppose not
Aught of defence nor of barrier, of forest or precip-
ice piled:
But the will of the wind works ever as his that desires
what he knows not,
And the wail of his want unfulfilled is as one
making moan for her child.
And the cry of his triumph is even as the crying of
hunger that maddens
The heart of a strong man aching in vain as the
wind's heart aches
And the sadness itself of the land for its infinite
solitude saddens
More for the sound than the silence athirst for the
sound that slakes.
And the sunset at last and the twilight are dead:
and the darkness is breathless
With fear of the wind's breath rising that seems
and seems not to sleep:
But a sense of the sound of it alway, a spirit un-
sleeping and deathless,
Ghost or God, evermore moves on the face of the
deep.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

CROWNED, girdled, garbed and shod with light
and fire,
Son first-born of the morning, sovereign star!
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert most far,
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy lyre
Hung highest above the dawn-enkindled quire
Where all ye sang together, all that are,
And all the starry songs behind thy car
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim thee sire.

" If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,"
And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were impelled
Toward one great end, thy glory—nay, not then,
Not yet mightst thou be praised enough of men.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

A N hour ere sudden sunset fired the west,
Arose two stars upon the pale deep east.

The hall of heaven was clear for night's high feast,
Yet was not yet day's fiery heart at rest.

Love leapt up from his mother's burning breast
To see those warm twin lights, as day decreased,
Wax wider, till when all the sun had ceased
As suns they shone from evening's kindled crest.

Across them and between, a quickening fire,
Flamed Venus, laughing with appeased desire.

Their dawn, scarce lovelier for the gleam of tears,
Filled half the hollow shell 'twixt heaven and earth
With sound like moonlight, mingling moan and mirth,
Which rings and glitters down the darkling years.

TRAfalgar Day

SEA, that art ours as we are thine, whose name
Is one with England's even as light with flame,
Dost thou as we, thy chosen of all men, know
This day of days when death gave life to fame ?

Dost thou not kindle above and thrill below
With rapturous record, with memorial glow,
Remembering this thy festal day of fight,
And all the joy it gave, and all the woe ?

Never since day broke flowerlike forth of night
Broke such a dawn of battle. Death in sight
Made of the man whose life was like the sun
A man more godlike than the lord of light.

There is none like him, and there shall be none.
When England bears again as great a son,
He can but follow fame where Nelson led.
There is not and there cannot be but one.

As earth has but one England, crown and head
Of all her glories till the sun be dead,
Supreme in peace and war, supreme in song,
Supreme in freedom, since her rede was read,

Since first the soul that gave her speech grew strong
To help the right and heal the wild world's wrong,
So she hath but one royal Nelson, born
To reign on time above the years that throng.

The music of his name puts fear to scorn,
And thrills our twilight through with sense of morn:
As England was, how should not England be?
No tempest yet has left her banner torn.

No year has yet put out the day when he
Who lived and died to keep our kingship free
Wherever seas by warring winds are worn
Died, and was one with England and the sea.

CROMWELL'S STATUE¹

WHAT needs our Cromwell stone or bronze to say
His was the light that lit on England's way
The sundawn of her time-compelling power,
The noontide of her most imperial day ?

His hand won back the sea for England's dower;
His footfall bade the Moor change heart and cower;
His word on Milton's tongue spake law to France
When Piedmont felt the she-wolf Rome devour.

From Cromwell's eyes the light of England's glance
Flashed, and bowed down the kings by grace of chance,
The priest-anointed princes; one alone
By grace of England held their hosts in trance.

The enthroned Republic from her kinglier throne
Spake, and her speech was Cromwell's. Earth has
known
No lordlier presence. How should Cromwell stand
With kinglets and with queenlings hewn in stone ?

Incarnate England in his warrior hand
Smote, and as fire devours the blackening brand
Made ashes of their strengths who wrought her
wrong,
And turned the strongholds of her foes to sand.

¹ Refused by the party of reaction and disunion in the House of Commons on the 17th of June, 1895.

His praise is in the sea's and Milton's song;
What praise could reach him from the weakling
 throng
 That rules by leave of tongues whose praise is
 shame—
Him, who made England out of weakness strong ?

There needs no clarion's blast of broad-blown fame
To bid the world bear witness whence he came
 Who bade fierce Europe fawn at England's heel
And purged the plague of lineal rule with flame.

There needs no witness graven on stone or steel
For one whose work bids fame bow down and kneel;
 Our man of men, whose time-commanding name
Speaks England, and proclaims her Commonweal.

ENGLAND : AN ODE

I

Far and near from the swan's nest here the storm-
birds bred of her fair white breast,
Sons whose home was the sea-wave's foam, have
borne the fame of her east and west;
North and south has the storm-wind's mouth rung
praise of England and England's quest.

Fame, wherever her flag flew, never forbore to fly
with an equal wing:
France and Spain with their warrior train bowed
down before her as thrall to king;
India knelt at her feet, and felt her sway more fruitful
of life than spring.

Darkness round them as iron bound fell off from races
of elder name,
Slain at sight of her eyes, whose light bids freedom
lighten and burn as flame;
Night endures not the touch that cures of kingship
tyrants, and slaves of shame.

All the terror of time, where error and fear were lords
of a world of slaves,
Age on age in resurgent rage and anguish darkening
as waves on waves,
Fell or fled from a face that shed such grace as
quickeneth the dust of graves.

Things of night at her glance took flight : the
strengths of darkness recoiled and sank:
Sank the fires of the murderous pyres whereon wild
agony writhed and shrank:
Rose the light of the reign of right from gulfs of years
that the darkness drank.

Yet the might of her wings in flight, whence glory
lightens and music rings,
Loud and bright as the dawn's, shall smite and still
the discord of evil things,
Yet not slain by her radiant reign, but darkened now
by her sail-stretched wings.

II

Music made of change and conquest, glory born of
evil slain,
Stilled the discord, slew the darkness, bade the lights
of tempest wane,
Where the deathless dawn of England rose in sign
that right should reign.

Mercy, where the tiger wallowed mad and blind with
blood and lust,
Justice, where the jackal yelped and fed, and slaves
allowed it just,
Rose as England's light on Asia rose, and smote them
down to dust.

Justice bright as mercy, mercy girt by justice with
her sword,
Smote and saved and raised and ruined, till the tyrant-
ridden horde
Saw the lightning fade from heaven and knew the
sun for God and lord.

Where the footfall sounds of England, where the
smile of England shines,
Rings the tread and laughs the face of freedom, fair
as hope divines
Days to be, more brave than ours and lit by lordlier
stars for signs.

All our past acclaims our future : Shakespeare's
voice and Nelson's hand,
Milton's faith and Wordsworth's trust in this our
chosen and chainless land,
Bear us witness : come the world against her,
England yet shall stand.

Earth and sea bear England witness if he lied who
said it; he
Whom the winds that ward her, waves that clasp,
and herb and flower and tree
Fed with English dews and sunbeams, hail as more
than man may be.

No man ever spake as he that bade our England be
but true,
Keep but faith with England fast and firm, and none
should bid her rue;
None may speak as he: but all may know the sign
that Shakespeare knew.

III

From the springs of the dawn, from the depths of the
noon, from the heights of the night that shine,
Hope, faith, and remembrance of glory that found
but in England her throne and her shrine,
Speak louder than song may proclaim them, that
here is the seal of them set for a sign.

And loud as the sea's voice thunders applause of the
land that is one with the sea
Speaks Time in the ear of the people that never at
heart was not inly free
The word of command that assures us of life, if we
will but that life shall be;

If the race that is first of the races of men who behold
unashamed the sun
Stand fast and forget not the sign that is given of the
years and the wars that are done,
The token that all who are born of its blood should in
heart as in blood be one.

The word of remembrance that lightens as fire from
the steeps of the storm-lit past
Bids only the faith of our fathers endure in us, firm
as they held it fast:
That the glory which was from the first upon England
alone may endure to the last.

That the love and the hate may change not, the faith
may not fade, nor the wrath nor scorn,
That shines for her sons and that burns for her foemen
as fire of the night or the morn:
That the births of her womb may forget not the sign
of the glory wherein they were born.

A light that is more than the sunlight, an air that is
brighter than morning's breath,
Clothes England about as the strong sea clasps her,
and answers the word that it saith;
The word that assures her of life if she change not,
and choose not the ways of death.

Change darkens and lightens around her, alternate in
hope and in fear to be:
Hope knows not if fear speak truth, nor fear whether
hope be not blind as she:
But the sun is in heaven that beholds her immortal,
and girdled with life by the sea.

"WHEN THE HOUNDS OF SPRING"
CHORUS FROM "ATALANTA IN CALYDON"

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamour of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling ?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring !
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
 And all the season of snows and sins;
 The days dividing lover and lover,
 The light that loses, the night that wins;
 And time remembered is grief forgotten,
 And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
 And in green underwood and cover
 Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
 Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
 The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
 From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
 And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
 And the oat is heard above the lyre,
 And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
 The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
 Follows with dancing and fills with delight
 The Mænad and the Bassarid;
 And soft as lips that laugh and hide
 The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
 And screen from seeing and leave in sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
 The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
 Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
 The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
 But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
 To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
 The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

“BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF YEARS”
CHORUS FROM “ATALANTA IN CALYDON”

BEFORE the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven ;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
And dust of the labouring earth;
And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
And fashioned with loathing and love
With life before and after
And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labour and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

"WHO HATH GIVEN MAN SPEECH?"
CHORUS FROM "ATALANTA IN CALYDON"

WH0 hath given man speech ? or who hath set
therein

A thorn for peril and a snare for sin ?
For in the word his life is and his breath,
 And in the word his death,
That madness and the infatuate heart may breed
 From the word's womb the deed
And life bring one thing forth ere all pass by,
Even one thing which is ours yet cannot die—
Death. Hast thou seen him ever anywhere,
Time's twin-born brother, imperishable as he
Is perishable and plaintive, clothed with care
 And mutable as sand,
But death is strong and full of blood and fair
And perdurable and like a lord of land ?

Nay, time thou seest not, death thou wilt not see
Till life's right hand be loosened from thine hand
 And thy life-days from thee.

For the gods very subtly fashion
 Madness with sadness upon earth:
Not knowing in any wise compassion,
 Nor holding pity of any worth;
And many things they have given and taken,
 And wrought and ruined many things;

The firm land have they loosed and shaken,
 And sealed the sea with all her springs;
 They have wearied time with heavy burdens,
 And vexed the lips of life with breath:
 Set men to labour and given them guerdons,
 Death, and great darkness after death:
 Put moans into the bridal measure
 And on the bridal wools a stain;
 And circled pain about with pleasure,
 And girdled pleasure about with pain;
 And strewed one marriage-bed with tears and fire
 For extreme loathing and supreme desire.

What shall be done with all these tears of ours ?
 Shall they make watersprings in the fair heaven
 To bathe the brows of morning ? or like flowers
 Be shed and shine before the starriest hours,
 Or made the raiment of the weeping Seven ?
 Or rather, O our masters, shall they be
 Food for the famine of the grievous sea,
 A great well-head of lamentation
 Satiating the sad gods ? or fall and flow
 Among the years and seasons to and fro,
 And wash their feet with tribulation
 And fill them full with grieving ere they go ?
 Alas, our lords, and yet alas again,
 Seeing all your iron heaven is gilt as gold
 But all we smite thereat in vain;
 Smite the gates barred with groanings manifold,
 But all the floors are paven with our pain.
 Yea, and with weariness of lips and eyes,
 With breaking of the bosom, and with sighs,
 We labour, and are clad and fed with grief
 And filled with days we would not fain behold

And nights we would not hear of; we wax old,
All we wax old and wither like a leaf.
We are outcast, strayed between bright sun and moon;
Our light and darkness are as leaves of flowers,
Black flowers and white, that perish; and the noon
As midnight, and the night as daylight hours.
A little fruit a little while is ours,
And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by one
Lay hands upon the draught that quickeneth,
Fulfilled with all tears shed and all things done,
And stir with soft imperishable breath
The bubbling bitterness of life and death,
And hold it to our lips and laugh; but they
Preserve their lips from tasting night or day,
Lest they too change and sleep, the fates that spun,
The lips that made us and the hands that slay;
Lest all these change, and heaven bow down to none,
Change and be subject to the secular sway
And terrene revolution of the sun.
Therefore they thrust it from them, putting time away.

I would the wine of time, made sharp and sweet
With multitudinous days and nights and tears
And many mixing savours of strange years,
Were no more trodden of them under feet,
Cast out and spilt about their holy places:
That life were given them as a fruit to eat
And death to drink as water; that the light
Might ebb, drawn backward from their eyes, and night
Hide for one hour the imperishable faces.
That they might rise up sad in heaven, and know
Sorrow and sleep, one paler than young snow,

One cold as blight of dew and ruinous rain;
 Rise up and rest and suffer a little, and be
 Awhile as all things born with us and we,
 And grieve as men, and like slain men be slain.

For now we know not of them; but one saith
 The gods are gracious, praising God; and one,
 When hast thou seen? or hast thou felt his breath
 Touch, nor consume thine eyelids as the sun,
 Nor fill thee to the lips with fiery death?

None hath beheld him, none
 Seen above other gods and shapes of things,
 Swift without feet and flying without wings,
 Intolerable, not clad with death or life,
 Insatiable, not known of night or day,
 The lord of love and loathing and of strife
 Who gives a star and takes a sun away;
 Who shapes the soul, and makes her a barren wife
 To the earthly body and grievous growth of clay;
 Who turns the large limbs to a little flame
 And binds the great sea with a little sand;
 Who makes desire, and slays desire with shame;
 Who shakes the heaven as ashes in his hand;
 Who, seeing the light and shadow for the same,
 Bids day waste night as fire devours a brand,
 Smites without sword, and scourges without rod;
 The supreme evil, God.

Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us,
 One saith, and hidden our eyes away from sight,
 And made us transitory and hazardous,
 Light things and slight;
 Yet have men praised thee, saying, He hath made
 And he doeth right. [man thus,

Thou hast kissed us, and hast smitten ; thou hast laid
Upon us with thy left hand life, and said,
Live: and again thou hast said, Yield up your breath,
And with thy right hand laid upon us death.

Thou hast sent us sleep, and stricken sleep with
dreams,

Saying, Joy is not, but love of joy shall be;
Thou hast made sweet springs for all the pleasant
streams,

In the end thou hast made them bitter with the sea.

Thou hast fed one rose with dust of many men;

Thou hast marred one face with fire of many tears;
Thou hast taken love, and given us sorrow again;

With pain thou hast filled us full to the eyes and ears.
Therefore because thou art strong, our father, and we

Feeble; and thou art against us, and thine hand
Constrains us in the shallows of the sea

And breaks us at the limits of the land;
Because thou hast bent thy lightnings as a bow,

And loosed the hours like arrows; and let fall
Sins and wild words and many a wingèd woe

And wars among us, and one end of all;
Because thou hast made the thunder, and thy feet

Are as a rushing water when the skies
Break, but thy face as an exceeding heat

And flames of fire the eyelids of thine eyes;
Because thou art over all who are over us;

Because thy name is life and our name death;
Because thou art cruel and men are piteous,

And our hands labour and thine hand scattereth;
Lo, with hearts rent and knees made tremulous,

Lo, with ephemeral lips and casual breath,
At least we witness of thee ere we die

274 "WHO HATH GIVEN MAN SPEECH?"

That these things are not otherwise, but thus;
That each man in his heart sigheth, and saith,
That all men even as I,
All we are against thee, against thee, O God most high.

But ye, keep ye on earth
Your lips from over-speech,
Loud words and longing are so little worth;
And the end is hard to reach.
For silence after grievous things is good,
And reverence, and the fear that makes men whole
And shame, and righteous governance of blood,
And lordship of the soul.
But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit,
And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root;
For words divide and rend;
But silence is most noble till the end.

THE OBLATION

A SK nothing more of me, sweet;
All I can give you I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more,
More would be laid at your feet:
Love that should help you to live,
Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give
Once to have sense of you more,
Touch you and taste of you sweet,
Think you and breathe you and live,
Swept of your wings as they soar,
Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
Give you but love of you, sweet:
He that hath more, let him give;
He that hath wings, let him soar;
Mine is the heart at your feet
Here, that must love you to live.

EPILOGUE

BETWEEN the wave-ridge and the strand
I let you forth in sight of land,
Songs that with storm-crossed wings and eyes
Strain eastward till the darkness dies;
Let signs and beacons fall or stand,
And stars and balefires set and rise;
Ye, till some lordlier lyric hand
Weave the beloved brows their crown,
At the beloved feet lie down.

O, whatsoever of life or light
Love hath to give you, what of might
Or heart or hope is yours to live,
I charge you take in trust to give
For very love's sake, in whose sight,
Through poise of hours alternative
And seasons plumed with light or night,
Ye live and move and have your breath
To sing with on the ridge of death.

I charge you faint not all night through
For love's sake that was breathed on you
To be to you as wings and feet
For travel, and as blood to heat
And sense of spirit to renew
And bloom of fragrance to keep sweet
And fire of purpose to keep true
The life, if life in such things be,
That I would give you forth of me.

Out where the breath of war may bear,
Out in the rank moist reddened air
That sounds and smells of death, and hath
No light but death's upon its path
Seen through the black wind's tangled hair,
I send you past the wild time's wrath
To find his face who bade you bear
Fruit of his seed to faith and love,
That he may take the heart thereof.

By day or night, by sea or street,
Fly till ye find and clasp his feet
And kiss as worshippers who bring
Too much love on their lips to sing,
But with hushed heads accept and greet
The presence of some heavenlier thing
In the near air; so may ye meet
His eyes, and droop not utterly
For shame's sake at the light you see.

Not utterly struck spiritless
For shame's sake and unworthiness
Of these poor forceless hands that come
Empty, these lips that should be dumb,
This love whose seal can but impress
These weak word-offerings wearisome
Whose blessings have not strength to bless
Nor lightnings fire to burn up aught
Nor smite with thunders of their thought.

One thought they have, even love; one light,
 Truth, that keeps clear the sun by night;
 One chord, of faith as of a lyre;
 One heat, of hope as of a fire;
 One heart, one music, and one might,
 One flame, one altar, and one choir;
 And one man's living head in sight
 Who said, when all time's sea was foam,
 "Let there be Rome"—and there was Rome.

As a star set in space for token
 Like a live word of God's mouth spoken,
 Visible sound, light audible,
 In the great darkness thick as hell
 A stanchless flame of love unsloken,
 A sign to conquer and compel,
 A law to stand in heaven unbroken
 Whereby the sun shines, and wherethrough
 Time's eldest empires are made new;

So rose up on our generations
 That light of the most ancient nations,
 Law, life, and light, on the world's way,
 The very God of very day,
 The sun-god; from their star-like stations
 Far down the night in disarray
 Fled, crowned with fires of tribulations,
 The suns of sunless years, whose light
 And life and law were of the night.

The naked kingdoms quenched and stark
Drove with their dead things down the dark,
Helmless; their whole world, throne by throne,
Fell, and its whole heart turned to stone,
Hopeless; their hands that touched our ark
Withered; and lo, aloft, alone,
On time's white waters man's one bark,
Where the red sundawn's open eye
Lit the soft gulf of low green sky.

So for a season piloted
It sailed the sunlight, and struck red
With fire of dawn reverberate
The wan face of incumbent fate
That paused half pitying overhead
And almost had foregone the freight
Of those dark hours the next day bred
For shame, and almost had forsworn
Service of night for love of morn.

Then broke the whole night in one blow,
Thundering; then all hell with one throë
Heaved, and brought forth beneath the stroke
Death; and all dead things moved and woke
That the dawn's arrows had brought low,
At the great sound of night that broke
Thundering, and all the old world-wide woe;
And under night's loud-sounding dome
Men sought her, and she was not Rome.

Still with blind hands and robes blood-wet
Night hangs on heaven, reluctant yet,
With black blood dripping from her eyes
On the soiled lintels of the skies,
With brows and lips that thirst and threat,
Heart-sick with fear lest the sun rise,
And aching with her fires that set,
And shuddering ere dawn bursts her bars,
Burns out with all her beaten stars.

In this black wind of war they fly
Now, ere that hour be in the sky
That brings back hope, and memory back,
And light and law to lands that lack;
That spiritual sweet hour whereby
The bloody-handed night and black
Shall be cast out of heaven to die;
Kingdom by kingdom, crown by crown,
The fires of darkness are blown down.

Yet heavy, grievous yet the weight
Sits on us of imperfect fate.
From wounds of other days and deeds
Still this day's breathing body bleeds;
Still kings for fear and slaves for hate
Sow lives of men on earth like seeds
In the red soil they saturate;
And we, with faces eastward set,
Stand sightless of the morning yet.

And many for pure sorrow's sake
Look back and stretch back hands to take
 Gifts of night's giving, ease and sleep,
 Flowers of night's grafting, strong to steep
The soul in dreams it will not break,
 Songs of soft hours that sigh and sweep
Its lifted eyelids nigh to wake
 With subtle plumes and lulling breath
 That soothe its weariness to death.

And many, called of hope and pride,
Fall ere the sunrise from our side.
 Fresh lights and rumours of fresh fames
 That shift and veer by night like flames,
Shouts and blown trumpets, ghosts that glide
 Calling, and hail them by dead names,
Fears, angers, memories, dreams divide
 Spirit from spirit, and wear out
 Strong hearts of men with hope and doubt.

Till time beget and sorrow bear
The soul-sick eyeless child despair,
 That comes among us, mad and blind,
 With counsels of a broken mind,
Tales of times dead and woes that were,
 And, prophesying against mankind,
Shakes out the horror of her hair
 To take the sunlight with its coils
 And hold the living soul in toils.

By many ways of death and moods
Souls pass into their servitudes.

Their young wings weaken, plume by plume
Drops, and their eyelids gather gloom
And close against man's frauds and feuds,
And their tongues call they know not whom
To help in their vicissitudes;
For many slaveries are, but one
Liberty, single as the sun.

One light, one law, that burns up strife,
And one sufficiency of life.

Self-established, the sufficing soul
Hears the loud wheels of changes roll,
Sees against man man bare the knife,
Sees the world severed, and is whole;
Sees force take dowerless fraud to wife,
And fear from fraud's incestuous bed
Crawl forth and smite his father dead:

Sees death made drunk with war, sees time
Weave many-coloured crime with crime,
State overthrown on ruining state,
And dares not be disconsolate.
Only the soul hath feet to climb,
Only the soul hath room to wait,
Hath brows and eyes to hold sublime
Above all evil and all good,
All strength and all decrepitude.

She only, she since earth began,
The many-minded soul of man,
From one incognizable root
That bears such divers-coloured fruit,
Hath ruled for blessing or for ban
The flight of seasons and pursuit;
She regent, she republican,
With wide and equal eyes and wings
Broods on things born and dying things.

Even now for love or doubt of us
The hour intense and hazardous
Hangs high with pinions vibrating
Whereto the light and darkness cling,
Dividing the dim season thus,
And shakes from one ambiguous wing
Shadow, and one is luminous,
And day falls from it; so the past
Torments the future to the last.

And we that cannot hear or see
The sounds and lights of liberty,
The witness of the naked God
That treads on burning hours unshod
With instant feet unwounded; we
That can trace only where he trod
By fire in heaven or storm at sea,
Not know the very present whole
And naked nature of the soul;

We that see wars and woes and kings,
And portents of enormous things,
Empires, and agonies, and slaves,
And whole flame of town-swallowing graves;
That hear the harsh hours clap sharp wings
Above the roar of ranks like waves,
From wreck to wreck as the world swings;
Know but that men there are who see
And hear things other far than we.

By the light sitting on their brows,
The fire wherewith their presence glows,
The music falling with their feet,
The sweet sense of a spirit sweet
That with their speech or motion grows
And breathes and burns men's hearts with heat;
By these signs there is none but knows
Men who have life and grace to give,
Men who have seen the soul and live.

By the strength sleeping in their eyes,
The lips whereon their sorrow lies
Smiling, the lines of tears unshed,
The large divine look of one dead
That speaks out of the breathless skies
In silence, when the light is shed
Upon man's soul of memories;
The supreme look that sets love free,
The look of stars and of the sea;

By the strong patient godhead seen
Implicit in their mortal mien,
The conscience of a God held still
And thunders ruled by their own will
And fast-bound fires that might burn clean
This worldly air that foul things fill,
And the afterglow of what has been,
That, passing, shows us without word
What they have seen, what they have heard;

By all these keen and burning signs
The spirit knows them and divines.
In bonds, in banishment, in grief,
Scoffed at and scourged with unbelief,
Foiled with false trusts and thwart designs,
Stripped of green days and hopes in leaf,
Their mere bare body of glory shines
Higher, and man gazing surelier sees
What light, what comfort is of these.

So I now gazing; till the sense
Being set on fire of confidence
Strains itself sunward, feels out far
Beyond the bright and morning star,
Beyond the extreme wave's refluxion,
To where the fierce first sunbeams are
Whose fire intolerant and intense
As birthpangs whence day burns to be
Parts breathless heaven from breathing sea.

I see not, know not, and am blest,
Master, who know that thou knowest,
 Dear lord and leader, at whose hand
 The first days and the last days stand,
With scars and crowns on head and breast,
 That fought for love of the sweet land
Or shall fight in her latter quest;
 All the days armed and girt and crowned
 Whose glories ring thy glory round.

Thou sawest, when all the world was blind,
The light that should be of mankind,
 The very day that was to be;
 And how shalt thou not sometime see
Thy city perfect to thy mind
 Stand face to living face with thee,
And no miscrowned man's head behind;
 The hearth of man, the human home,
 The central flame that shall be Rome ?

As one that ere a June day rise
Makes seaward for the dawn, and tries
 The water with delighted limbs
 That taste the sweet dark sea, and swims
Right eastward under strengthening skies,
 And sees the gradual rippling rims
Of waves whence day breaks blossom-wise
 Take fire ere light peer well above,
 And laughs from all his heart with love;

And softlier swimming with raised head
Feels the full flower of morning shed
 And fluent sunrise round him rolled
 That laps and laves his body bold
With fluctuant heaven in water's stead,
 And urgent through the growing gold
Strikes, and sees all the spray flash red,
 And his soul takes the sun, and yearns
 For joy wherewith the sea's heart burns;

So the soul seeking through the dark
Heavenward, a dove without an ark,
 Transcends the unnavigable sea
 Of years that wear out memory;
So calls, a sunward-singing lark,
 In the ear of souls that should be free;
So points them toward the sun for mark
 Who steer not for the stress of waves,
 And seek strange helmsmen, and are slaves.

For if the swimmer's eastward eye
Must see no sunrise—must put by
 The hope that lifted him and led
 Once, to have light about his head,
To see beneath the clear low sky
 The green foam-whitened wave wax red
And all the morning's banner fly—
 Then, as earth's helpless hopes go down,
 Let earth's self in the dark tides drown.

EPILOGUE

Yea, if no morning must behold
Man, other than were they now cold,
And other deeds than past deeds done,
Nor any near or far-off sun
Salute him risen and sunlike-souled,
Free, boundless, fearless, perfect, one,
Let man's world die like worlds of old,
And here in heaven's sight only be
The sole sun on the worldless sea.

